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GAELIC INCANTATIONS

CHARMS AND BLESSINGS

OF THE

HEBRIDES.

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OPINIONS

ON THE PAPER AFTER PUBLICATION IN THE TRANSACTIONS OF THE GAELIC SOCIETY OF INVERNESS.

The chief attraction of the present volume is the exhaustive work on Gaelic Charms and Incantations, by Mr William Mackenzie, who has collected an immense mass of curious old Gaelic material, which was never until now put on record. The paper covers nearly a hundred pages, and is a worthy complement of Nicolson's great work on Gaelic Proverbs. It is most curious to find that many traditions are yet preserved in the Highlands with regard to St Patrick's Hymn and other things intimately connected with, but now forgotten in Ireland.—*Professor O'Growney in The Irish Gaelic Journal.*

Mixed up with what was sound and scientific in mediæval medical practice was much that was neither the one nor the other. To the draught or bolus of the leech was often added a Charm or Incantation to render it efficacious. Many of those curious rhymes and ceremonies still survive, especially in the Uists and Barra, and an excellent collection of them was printed last season by Mr William Mackenzie, secretary of the Deer Forests Commission, a gentleman who had exceptional opportunities for gathering reliable information regarding these interesting matters.—*Professor Mackinnon on the Medical Gaelic MSS. (Opening Lecture to the Celtic Class, Edinburgh University, 30th Oct., 1894).*

From the folklorist point of view, one of the most interesting articles of recent years is Mr William Mackenzie's paper on the "Charms and Incantations" of the Outer Hebrides. . . . . It is remarkable enough that, whether practised by Catholics or Protestants, all those Healing Rhymes and Incantations bear internal evidence of what may be called a very venerable age. Even the most modern of them are of pre-Reformation times; whilst of the more striking and beautiful examples by far the greater number are mediæval. —*Rev. Alexander Stewart, LL.D., "Nether-Lochaber," in Inverness Courier.*

Mr William Mackenzie's article on the Gaelic Incantations and Charms of the Hebrides is of permanent value, and displays much learned research.—*Celtic Monthly.*

By far the most interesting paper in the volume is that of Mr William Mackenzie, secretary to the Crofters Commission, on Gaelic Incantations and Charms of the Hebrides. In his lengthy paper Mr Mackenzie gives a varied feast of old sayings, incantations, rhymes, prayers, and other interesting specimens of folklore. Mr Mackenzie's occupation has brought him a good deal in contact with the Outer Hebrides and other portions of the Highlands, and he has evidently kept his eyes open, and gathered not a little of the stores of knowledge which are treasured up in the folklore of the districts. The volume would be worth procuring and preserving did it contain nothing more than this one paper.—*Oban Times.*

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GAELIC INCANTATIONS

CHARMS AND BLESSINGS

OF THE

HEBRIDES

WITH TRANSLATIONS, AND PARALLEL ILLUSTRATIONS FROM IRISH, MANX, NORSE, AND OTHER SUPERSTITIONS.

BY

WILLIAM MACKENZIE,
SECRETARY, CROFTERS COMMISSION.

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NOTE.

On 23rd March, 1892, I read a paper on the "Gaelic Incantations, Charms and Blessings of the Hebrides," before a meeting of the Gaelic Society of Inverness. That paper has since been greatly added to and revised for the Transactions of the Society. It is now published at the request of friends who desire to have it in separate form.

WILLIAM MACKENZIE.

Edinburgh, January, 1895.

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GAELIC INCANTATIONS, CHARMS, AND BLESSINGS OF THE HEBRIDES.

At a meeting of this Society on 7th May, 1879, I read a paper entitled "Leaves from my Celtic Portfolio," concluding with a number of Gaelic Charms and Incantations I had gathered in various districts of the Highlands. The paper appears in Vol. VIII. of our Transactions. Various writers had previously published specimens of Gaelic Incantations, but so far as I am aware, our volume contains the first collection of them. Old writers on Highland superstitions make frequent reference to Charms; but while they give descriptions of Ceremonies, they unfortunately pass over the Incantations with contempt. There can be no doubt that many interesting relics of antiquity have thus been lost to the folk-lorist. The belief in these matters is rapidly becoming a thing of the past; and the Charms and Incantations are lost as each successive year death carries away the old people among whom alone they are to be found. While thus the field where Charms and Incantations may be got is becoming more and more limited, the collector has further to contend with these difficulties (first) that those who know them and believe in their efficacy will not communicate them to anyone on whom they may look as an unbeliever; and (second) that many who know them as matter of tradition are frequently ashamed to own the fact. It is satisfactory to know, however, that many of these relics of the past have been rescued, and it is to be hoped that members of this Society may do what they can to add to our store of this peculiar kind of folk-lore ere it be too late. Our friend, Mr Alexander Macbain, published a valuable collection of them in the *Highland Monthly* during last year (1891). To-night I propose to resume the subject commenced before this Society in 1879; and although it may be necessary to recall here and there portions of my former paper, and also to refer to, and sometimes to quote from, the writings of Mr Macbain and others, I will endeavour to place before you, in the main, Charms and Incantations which, so far as I am aware, have not hitherto been published.

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From the earliest times we read of wizards and witches, sorcerers and magicians. The State punished them as persons dangerous to society, and the burning of witches forms an interesting if not a very edifying feature of our national history. In these proceedings the Churches have taken an active part. A popular proverb has it—"*Gheibh baobh a guidhe ged nach fhaigh a h-anam trocair*"—"A witch will get her wish though her soul may not get mercy." To banish from the minds of the people such a belief as this was a task which the Churches seemed to have placed before themselves. Our Gaelic-speaking Highlanders were taught to place no belief in witchcraft and divination, and our cousins in Ireland were taught the same lesson. In a Catholic Catechism I find the following among the things forbidden by the First Commandment :—

Q.—A bheil a Chiad Aithne 'bacail ni sam bith eile?

A.—Tha—buidseachd, eolasan, giseagan, innse-fortain, a' toirt brigh a bruadar, agus gach comunn de 'n t-seorsa sin ris an Aibheistear.

Again, in the Catechism by Andrew Donlevy, Director of the Irish Community at Paris, published in that city in 1742, and still in use in Ireland, I find the following among the things forbidden by that commandment :—

Ceisd.—An bhfuil sé an aghaidh na hAithene-si Comhairle d' iarraidh air lucht fàisdine, Draoidheachta, no Piseóg, noch do ní cunnradh ris an Diabhal?

Freagradh.—A tá gan amhrus ; do bhrígh gur ab o'n Diabhal gheibhid gach Eolus, da mbí aca.

C.—Creud is Piseóga ann?

F.—Briathra do rádh, no Comharrtha do dheunamh chum críche, do chum nach bhful brígh na buaidh aca ó Náduir, ó Dhia, na ó 'n Eagluis.

Notwithstanding the influence of the Churches, the belief in witchcraft is not quite dead, and Charms and Incantations have survived to the present time. As to the supposed effect of witchcraft, I will quote a sentence from a leaflet which I picked up in Inverness last winter. It is headed the "Crofters and Witchcraft." The writer says he himself was confined in an asylum—a circumstance throwing all the light necessary on his lucubrations. His description of his feelings under what he believed to be the influence of witchcraft is, however, exceedingly interesting. It is as follows :—

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"As an example of how this man of sin punishes those who differ from him in religion, I may state that I am daily tortured by his most powerful agent, viz, witchcraft. It takes away the faculties of my brains; it makes my body feel as if some one was sticking hot irons in me, at other times I feel as cold as ice; it weakens me to such an extent that I am hardly able to move out of the position in which I stand; it gives me such a shock while I am walking on the public road that I am not able to stand and speak to any one; it has got such a hold upon my body and soul that I find that the most experienced members of the medical profession are unable to do any good to me."

The popular belief in witchcraft is also well expressed by Duncan Mackenzie, the Kinlochewe bard, in a song appearing at page 22 of his book. In this song the nuptials of a young couple are described. The mother of the bride, according to the bard, was a witch—her race being noted for "Buidseachd a's Draoidheachd a's Farmud." In the song the old lady is pictured as using herbs, assuming the form of a hare, and robbing her neighbours' cattle of their substance, endowing the musicians at the marriage with the power of playing fairy music, and by means of a Love Charm winning the affections of the bridegroom for her daughter. The following two verses will serve as specimens:—

'S i mathair Ceit Uilleim bha lamhach
'N uair chaidh i 'n *riochd gearr* feadh na duthch';
Bha im aic' a thoradh a' Bhraighe
'S bha 'n *caise bho mhnaibh* Leitir-iùgh,
Bha 'm bainne *cho tiugh* ris a' bharr aic'
(A's muighe dubh lan ann an cuil)
Ga 'bhleoghan *a dubhan na slabhruidh*,
'S i 'g *aithris nan rann* a bh'aig Fionn.

'N uair chuir iad a' charaid a chadal
Bha 'chailleach ga faire gu treang;
Chuir i *uisg'-oir* air an casan
A's *liath-lus* a's *aitionn* fo'n ceann.
Bha i ga'n *sianadh* 's ga'n teagasg
An dochas gun gineadh iad cloinn
'S chuir i *fath-fith* air na balaich,
Cha loisgeadh na dagaichean straoil.

In connection with Charms and Incantations, it has to be pointed out that while it appears to be impossible to get the malific Charms, or such as are identified with what is usually

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termed witchcraft,[1] there are numerous specimens which are really of a Christian character, and are intended by the invocation of the Trinity to defy evil agencies, or effect cures. In these cases the Charms are forms of prayer—a sort of ritual unauthorised by the Churches. Although the Churches might have laughed at them, those who practised them sincerely believed in them. A discussion on the domain of prayer forms no part of my subject, but I think the ordinary mind may find it difficult to see wherein lies the difference between the simple-minded peasant who, with implicit faith in its efficacy, mutters a prayer with the view of stopping the toothache or curing a colic, and the modern ecclesiastic who, by a prayer, hopes to stamp out the influenza.

As illustrating the Christian character of many of our old Charms, reference may be made to St Patrick's Hymn

[1] Since the above was written, my friend, Mr Walter Traill Dennison, West Brough, Sanday, has favoured me with the formula of old used in Orkney to acquire witchcraft. Mr Dennison wrote it down nearly 50 years ago from the recital of an old Orkney woman—the grand-daughter of a noted witch. The formula to be gone through to obtain witchcraft (or, as Mr Dennison says, in plain English, a formula for giving one's self to the Devil) was as follows :—

The person wishing to acquire the witch's knowledge must go to the sea-shore at midnight, must, as he goes, turn three times against the course of the sun, must lie down flat on his back with his head to the south, and on ground between the lines of high and low water. He must grasp a stone in each hand, have a stone at the side of each foot, a stone at his head, a flat stone on his chest, and another over his heart ; and must lie with arms and legs stretched out. He will then shut his eyes, and slowly repeat the following Incantation :—

O, Mester King o' a' that's ill,
Come fill me wi' the warlock skill,
An' I sall serve wi' all me will.
Trow [Satan] tak' me gin I sinno ! [shall not]
Trow tak' me gin I winno ! [will not]
Trow tak' me whin I cinno ! [cannot]
Come tak' me noo, an' tak' me a',
Tak' lights an' liver, pluck an' ga',
Tak' me, tak' me, noo, I say,
Fae de how o' de head tae de tip of de tae ;
Tak' a' dat's oot an' in o' me,
Tak' hide an' hair an' a' tae thee,
Tak' hert an' harns, flesh, bleud, an' büns, [bones]
Tak' a' atween de seeven stüns [stones]
I de name o' de muckle black Wallawa !

The person must lie quiet for a little time after repeating the Incantation. Then opening his eyes, he should turn on his left side, arise and fling the stones used in the operation into the sea. Each stone must be flung singly ; and with the throwing of each a certain malediction was said. Mr Dennison's informant professed to have forgotten the terms of the malediction, but he rather suspected she considered the imprecations too shocking to repeat.

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—one of the old Irish hymns preserved in the *Liber Hymnorum*, a collection made in the 10th or 11th century of hymns composed in former times. The hymn in question is attributed to St Patrick himself—"*Patraicc dorcne innimmunsa*"—and we are told that it was composed in the time of *Loegaire Meic Néill*, who persecuted the Saint and his followers. According to the Four Masters, Loegaire was killed by the Elements of God—*Dúile Dé*—in the year 458. In the hymn we have the Saint binding himself to God, and invoking heavenly powers for protection against *inter alia* "Incantations of false prophets" (*fri tinchetla saibfâthe*), and against "Spells of women and smiths and druids" (*fri brichta ban 7 gobann 7 druad*). [For hymn in full, *vide* "Scottish Celtic Review," p. 49].

Charms and Incantations are known by different names, and although many of them seem to be now regarded as synonymous, there was doubtless originally a difference of meaning. We have the *Rosad*, a malific charm, which rendered its victim powerless. Thus the hunter who was unlucky in his sport believed that a witch or other evil-disposed person put a *Rosad* on himself or his gun. The opposite of *Rosad* is *Sian*—the latter being the spell that protected one from evil agencies and ordinary dangers.

Geas was a form of enchantment—*Daoine fo gheasaibh* are men spellbound and enchanted; and most Inverness men are acquainted with the popular belief that the *Feinne* are enchanted, reclining on their elbows in Craigachô. The word *gisreagan* or *geiseagan*, which is commonly employed to signify enchantments, and the belief in witchcraft, is doubtless from *geas*. This word occurs in Manx; and in Moore's "Folklore of the Isle of Man" we have, on page 89, an account of *Caillagh-ny-Ghueshag*, or the "Old woman of the spells."

Then we have *ubag*, *ubhaidh*, *obag*, or *obaidh*, meaning a "charm" or "incantation." In Old Irish the form is *upaidh*. The word occurs in Manx as *obbee*, and we may translate *fer-obbee* as "a man charmer," and *ben-obbee* as "a woman charmer."

The *Eolas*, which really means "knowledge," is probably the most popular of our charms. The origin of *Eolais* in the Western Islands, according to the local traditions, is as follows:—

St Columba had two tenants. One had a family and the other had not. The rent was the same in each case. The one who had no family complained to the Saint of the unfairness of his having to pay as much rent as the other considering his circumstances. The Saint told him to steal a shilling's worth from any person, and to restore it at the end of a year. The man took the advice, and

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stole a small book belonging to St Columba himself, and thereafter he proceeded to the Outer Hebrides, where he permitted people to read the book for a certain sum of money. The book was read with great avidity, as it contained all the "Eolais" composed by the Saint for the curing of men and cattle. Thus it was that these "Eolais" came to be so well known in the Western Islands. The farmer went back to St Columba at the end of a year, having amassed a considerable fortune, and restored the book. The Saint immediately burned the book, so that he himself might not on its account earn a reputation which he thought he did not deserve.

Finally, we have the *orr* or *orra*, *ortha*, or, as the Irish have it, *oráid*. As the English word "charm" is derived from the Latin *carmen*, a song: and "incantation" from *cano*, I sing; so *orr* may be derived from *oro*, I pray. The Irish *oráid* and the Latin *oratio* are probably different forms of the same word. In the Western Islands of Ireland *ortha* means a hymn. Macalpine in his Dictionary defines *orra* as "amulet or enchantment to effect something wonderful;" and he gives the following list of examples:—

Orra-ghraidh—An amulet[1] to provoke unlawful love.
Orra-sheamlachais—An amulet to make a cow allow the calf of another cow to suck her.
Orra-chomais—An amulet to deprive a man of his virility, particularly on his marriage night, by way of vengeance.
Orra-na-h-aoine—An amulet to drown a foe.
Orra an-donuis—An amulet to send one's foe to the mischief.
Orra-ghrudaire—An amulet to make every drop of the wash to overflow the wash-tuns; and
An orra-bhalbh—An amulet to prevent one's agent to make a defence in a court of justice.

The Charms and Incantations which follow may be divided into five classes:—First—Those aiming at divination; Second—Those which, by means of volition, seek to attain certain ends; Third—Protective Charms and Amulets; Fourth—Those intended for the cure of men and the lower animals from certain diseases; and Fifth—Blessings and miscellaneous Charms.

I will commence with the subject of divination. Under the general title of *Divination*, I will take first the *Frith*.

[1] Although "amulet" is the word used, it is obvious that "charm" or "incantation" is meant.

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So far as I am aware, the *Frith* is quite unknown on the mainland. Professor O'Growney, of St Patrick's College, Maynooth, informs me he never heard of it in Ireland. He, however, explains that the word *frith* is a verb in Irish, and signifies "to find." One can therefore easily conceive how it came to be used in the special sense given it in this charm—"*Frith Isú isin Tempull* (literally, Inventus est Jesus in Templo, and signifying the finding of Jesus in the Temple)—would easily lead the unlettered to take *frith* as a noun. Macalpine appears to be the only Gaelic Lexicographer who gives us a definition of it in the sense here used. He describes it as "an Incantation to find whether people at a great distance or at sea be in life." It is, in short, a species of horoscope, wherein the position of the objects which meet our eyes takes the place in the *Frith* which the position of the heavenly bodies took in the horoscope of the ancient astrologers.

The *Frith* is religious in its character, and is attributed to the Virgin Mary. It is called in Uist, *Frith a rinn Moire dha Mac*—"the *Frith* that Mary made for her Son." According to Holy Writ, Joseph and the Virgin Mary went with the child Jesus, when he was twelve years old, to the Feast of the Passover in Jerusalem. When they fulfilled the days of the feast, they returned, but the child Jesus tarried behind them in Jerusalem, and they knew it not. The account of their three days' anxious search for him is narrated in the Bible, and our Highland poetess, *Sileas na Ceapaich*, beautifully describes the whole situation in *Laoidh na Maighdinn* :—

. . . . . .

Thug iad cliu do Dhia 's an Teampull
'S gu Nasaret air dhaibh bhi tilleadh,
Suil ga'n tug iad air an gualainn
Dh' ionndrainn iad bhuap am Messiah.
'S iadsan a bha duilich, deurach,
'Nuair nach b' urrainn doibh ga sheanchas,
'S tuirseach a bha iad mu dheighinn,
Na trì là bha iad ga 'shireadh ;
'N àm 'bhi dol seachad an Teampuill
Dh'aithnich iad a chainnt gu beathail,
Eadar na doctoirean a' teagasg,
Bu deas a thigeadh dha labhairt.

This subject, too, forms one of the Fifteen Mysteries of Mary recognised by the Catholic Church. During the search the Virgin

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Mary, we are told, made a *Frith* which enabled her to discover the Saviour among the doctors in the Temple, and left it for the benefit of future generations.

The *Frith* is not yet an institution of the past in some of the Outer Islands; and when the fate of absent ones is causing friends anxiety, or when it is uncertain whether the illness of men or of the lower animals may speedily pass away or terminate fatally, a *Frith* is made. A *Frith* may be made at any time; but the first Monday of the quarter—*a' chiad Di-luain de'n Raithe*—is considered the most auspicious.

The mode of making the *Frith* is as follows:—

In the morning the *Ave Maria*, or *Beannachadh Moire*, is said thus—

Beannaichear dhut, a Mhoire,[1]
Tha thu lan dhe na grasan;
Tha 'n Tighearna maille riut;
'S beannuichte thu measg nam ban;
'S beannaichte toradh do bhronn—Iosa.
A Naomh Mhoire—'Mhathair Dhe—
Guidh air ar son-ne, na peacaich,
A nis agus aig uair ar bais—Amen.

After repeating the *Ave*, the person proceeds with closed eyes to the door. On reaching the *maide-buinn*, or door-step, he opens his eyes, and if he sees the Cross *(Crois Chriosda)*, although it were only made with two straws lying across each other, it is a sign that all will be well. On getting outside, he proceeds round the house sunwise *(deiseal)*, repeating the following Incantation:—

Dia romham;
Moire am dheaghaidh
'S am Mac a thug Righ nan Dul
'S a chàirich Brighde na glaic.
Mis' air do shlios, a Dhia,
Is Dia na'm luirg.
Mac Moire, a's Righ nan Dul,
A shoillseachadh gach ni dheth so,
Le a ghras, mu'm choinneamh.

[1] This version of the *Ave Maria* I noted from an old Uist lady. Other versions commence "Failte dhut, a Mhoire." In Donlevy's Irish Catechism, previously referred to, it begins "Dia do bheatha a Mhuire." In Munster the form is—"Go mbeannuighthear duit, a Mhuire."

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Translated—

God before me;
The Virgin Mary after me;
And the Son sent by the King of the Elements;
And whom St Bridget took in her arms.
I am on thy land [side ?], O God!
And God on my footsteps;
May the Son of Mary, King of the Elements,
Reveal the meaning of each of these things
Before me, through His grace.

Another version of the Incantation is as follows:—

Tha mise falbh air srath Chriosd:
Dia romham, Dia am dheighidh,
A's Dia a m' luirg.[1]
A Fhrith a rinn Moire dha 'Mac,
A sheid Brighde troimh a glaic,
Mar a fhuair ise fios firinneach,
Gun fhios breige,
Mise dh' fhaicinn samhla 's coltas —— —— [2]

Translated—

I go forth on the track of Christ—
God before me, God behind me,
And God on my footsteps.
The *Frith* that Mary made for her Son,
Which Bridget blew through her palm;
And as she got a true response,
Without a false one,
May I behold the likeness and similitude of
A—— B——.

The Incantation finished, the person looks forth over the country, and by the auguries or omens which meet the eye he divines what will be the fate of the man or animal for whom the *Frith* is being made—whether the absent one, about whom nothing is known, is in life, and well; or whether the sick man or beast at home will recover from his ailment. Subjoined is a list of objects, with their significance. This list is compiled from various sources, but largely from notes placed at my disposal by Father

[1] We have similar expressions in St Patrick's Hymn, already referred to—
"Crist lim Crist rium Crist imdegaid"
(Christ with me, Christ before me, Christ after me).

[2] Here the name of the missing person was sa'd.

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Allan Macdonald, Dalibrog, South Uist, a gentleman to whom I am indebted for much information in connection with this paper :—

A man coming towards you..	An excellent sign.
A cock looking towards you.	Also an excellent sign.
A man standing.....	Sign of a sick man recovering and casting off illness.
A man lying down.....	Sickness ; continued illness.
A beast lying down.....	Ominous—sickness ; continued illness ; death.
A beast rising up.....	Sign of a man recovering and throwing off illness.
A bird on the wing.....	A good sign.
A bird on the wing coming to you.....	Sign of a letter coming.
A woman seen standing.....	A bad sign—such as death, or some untoward event—*(Am bas, no ni rosadach air chor-eigin).*[1]
A woman seen passing or returning	Not so bad.
A woman with red hair	Not lucky.[2]
A woman with fair hair *(falt ban)*.....	Not lucky.
A woman with black hair *(falt dubh)*.....	Lucky.
A woman with brown hair *(falt donn)*.....	Luckiest.
Fowls without a cock in their midst.....	Not a good sign.
Stonechat *(Clachran)*.....	Untoward *(rosadach)*—

Chunnaic mi 'n t-seilcheag an talamh toll,
Chunnaic mi 'n clachran air lic luim,
Chunnaic mi 'n searrach 's a chul rium,

[1] Bu choir do dhuine e-fein a choisrigeadh nam faiceadh e boirionnach an àm a bhi 'deanamh na Frithe—(A man should cross himself should he see a woman when making the Frith).

[2] Red hair does not appear to have been favoured by the Celts. An old song says—

Cha ghabh mi 'n te fhrionasaich, chonasach, *ruadh*,
A chumas an Donus na mhollachdainn suas.

Again, Lady Wilde, writing of Irish superstitions, says—"It is unlucky to meet a red-haired man or woman the first thing in the morning ; but a freckled red-haired woman is particularly dangerous. Should she be in your path on first going out, turn back at once, for danger is in the way. Some say that Judas Iscariot had red hair, hence the tradition of its evil augury."

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Dh' fhaithnich mi nach reachadh a' bhliadhna leam—
Chaill mi bean-an-tighe 's a' chlann. [1]

A lark [2]	A good sign.
A dove	A good sign.
A crow or raven [3]	A bad sign; death.
A sparrow *(glaiseun)*	Not lucky—but blessed. (It foretells the death of a child).
A wild duck *(Lach)*	A good sign.
Ducks *(Tunnagan)* [4]	Good. (For sailors especially—meaning safety from drowning).
A dog	Good luck.
A cat	Good for Mackintoshes only. To others it is considered *rosadach*, or untoward. The cat is regarded as evil, as shown by the fact that witches are believed to assume this form.
A pig	Good for Campbells. For others indifferent when facing you; bad with its back towards you.
A calf, or lamb	Lucky with its face to you; good with side.
A horse	Lucky.
A brown horse	Is the best.
A chestnut or red horse	A bad sign; death.

[1] Another version runs—

Chunnaic mi seilcheag air lic luim
Chunnaic mi searrach 's a chulthaobh rium,
Chuala mi 'chuthag 's gun bhiadh am bhroinn,
Dh' aithnich mi nach cinneadh a' bhliadhna leam.

[2] The lark was considered sacred, and to it the endearing term of *Uiseag Mhoire* (the lark of the Virgin Mary) was frequently applied. In Orkney the term "Wir Lady's hen" was applied of old to the lark. In Ireland the redbreast is associated with the Virgin, its Irish name being *Spideog-Mhuire*.

[3] The raven is always regarded as ominous. In the Saga of "Howard the Halt," for instance, it is referred to as "hawk of slaughter" and "blood fowl." In Ireland, as Lady Wilde tells us, "when a raven is seen hovering round a cottage, evil is near, and a death may follow, or some great disaster; therefore, to turn away ill-luck, say at once: 'May fire and water be on you, O bird of evil, and may the curse of God be on your head for ever and ever.'"

[4] Ducks are considered blessed. Tradition informs us that on a certain occasion Jesus had to take refuge, and that he was concealed under straw. Hens scraped the straw away, thus exposing him, but the ducks pushed it back again. The duck has since been considered blessed.

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As to the colours of horses generally, we have the following:—

Each donn	Fearann.	Brown horse	Land.
Each glas.....	Fairge.	Grey horse... ...	The ocean.
Each ruadh.....	Reilig.	Chestnut horse..	The churchyard.
Each dubh.....	Mulad.	Black horse.....	Sorrow.

I now proceed to deal with the class intended to accomplish certain ends by the exercise of the will, and commence with

LOVE CHARMS.

In the list of amulets given from Macalpine, we have the *Orra-ghraidh*, or Love Charm. The Highlanders of old, like the ancient Greeks, seem to have believed in the efficacy of charms and philtres, in order, as Erastus has it, to force men and women to love and hate whom they will. "Sagæ omnes sibi arrogant notitiam, et facultatem in amorem alliciendi quos velint; odia inter conjuges serendi." We have the idea of the Love Charm in Duncan Ban Macintyre's *Rainn a ghabhas maighdean d'a leannan* (Verses which a maiden will say to her sweetheart), but as the ceremony prescribed may, on the whole, be regarded as impossible, it is clear that the poet himself did not believe in the efficacy of such Incantations. That the idea has, however, survived to recent times is undoubted, and a good instance of it is given by the Kenlochewe bard in the poem already referred to. Describing how the bridegroom was "charmed" by the young woman's mother, he says:—

'S beag a bha dhuil aige 'posadh
An la chaidh Seonaid 'na chainnt—
Rug i da uair air a chrògan
A's chuir i na *h-òrrachann* annt;
Thionndaidh a chridhe le sòlas:
Chaidh dalladh a's sgleò air 's an àm,
'S cha 'n fhaiceadh e aon te cho bòidheach
Ri Ceit ged a sheòladh e 'n Fhraing.

In the Highlands, a herb called *gradh a's fuath* (love and hate) was believed, when properly applied, to provoke love or hate, according to the wish of the person using the Charm. For the following Incantation to excite love, I am indebted to Mr Macbain:—

Suil bhlath Chriosd air Peadar,
Suil chaomh na h-Oighe air Eoin;
Gu'n leanadh, gu'n leonadh, gu'n lotadh,
Gu'n iadhadh gu teann seachd altanach,

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Le seachd snaim cruaidh-shnaim
Mu chridhe na h-Eala
'Rinn mise 'lot 's a leon
Gus an coinnich lot ri lot,
Leon ri leon, 's a cridhe 'breabadh le aoibhneas
Ri faicinn gnuis a ruin :
An ainm an Athar, &c.

Translated—

The soft eye of Christ upon Peter,
The mild eye of the Virgin on John ;
To follow, to wound, and to pierce ;
May seven moss grasses with seven hard knots
Wind round the heart of the Swan.
That caused my wound and piercing,
Until wound meets wound and gash to gash,
And her heart jumps with joy
At seeing the face of her love :
In the name of the Father, &c.

A herb—evidently the *altanach*, a kind of mountain or moss grass —was manipulated during the saying of the above.

Our Irish cousins also have their Love Charms, or, as they call them, *Ortha na Seirce*. To Professor O'Growney, of Maynooth, I am indebted for the following, received by him from Mr O'Faherty, of the west of Connaught :—

Ortha a chuir Muire in ím,
Ortha seirce 's síor-ghràdh ;
Nar stadaidh do cholann, acht d' aire bheith orm
Go leanfaidh do ghràdh mo ghnaoi
Mar leanas an bhò an laogh
O'n là so amach go h-uair mo bháis.

Translated—

A charm Mary (B. Virgin) put in *butter*,
A charm of affection and lasting love ;
May thy body not rest, but may'st thou be
uneasy about me
Until thy love follows my countenance
As the cow follows the calf,
From to-day till death's hour.

As a companion-picture, the following Love Charm from England may be appropriately given. The love-sick maiden was one Susan Lebway ; and the precious document containing the charm

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was found some 30 years ago. The paper on which the formula was written also contains figures of the sun and moon and other heavenly bodies, and the magic square. Along with it were parings of the finger and toe nails and a tiny piece of linen, believed to be a portion of Susan's undergarment. The whole was neatly folded up, and was wrapped in three folds of linen and stitched under a covering of silk. This curious collection was worn in the left armpit. The formula was as follows:—

"Susan Lebway to draw the affections of Theobald Young to herself, so that he shall never have any rest or peace until he do return unto her, *and make* her his lawful wife. Let the spirits of the planets continually torment him until he do fulfil this, my request; Cossiel Lachiel Samuel Michail Araiel Rhaphail Gabriel, I continually stir up his mind thereto. Fiat fiat fiat cito cito cito. Amen."—*Reliquary, vol. x.*

That the Philtre or Love Potion was in use among the ancient Celts there can be no doubt. In support of this statement, I quote the following paragraph from the Irish Life of St Bridget in the "Book of Lismore," edited by Mr Whitley Stokes:—

"There was a certain man biding in Lassair's Church, and his wife was leaving him, and would not take bit nor sleep along with him. So he came to Bridget to ask for a Spell to make his wife love him. Bridget blessed water for him and said, 'Put that water over the house, and over the food, and over the drink of yourselves, and over the bed in the wife's absence.' When he had done thus the wife gave exceeding great love to him, so that she could not keep apart from him, even on one side of the house, but she was always at one of his hands. He went one day on a journey, and left the wife asleep. When the woman awoke she rose up lightly, and went after the husband, and saw him afar from her, with an arm of the sea between them. She cried out to her husband, and said that she would go into the sea unless he came to her."

In connection with the Love Charm and Philtre, a few sentences may be devoted to *Eolas a' Chomuis* already mentioned. I have been unable to obtain this *Eolas*; but it may be stated that it is referred to in Pennant's Tour in Scotland in 1772 (Vol. II., p. 265), where the unsuccessful lover is represented as revenging himself on his rival by charms potent as those of the shepherd Alphesibœus mentioned by Virgil. "Donald," we are told, "takes three threads of different hues, and ties three knots on each, three times imprecating the most cruel disappointments on the nuptial bed;

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but the bridegroom, to avert the harm, stands at the altar with an untied shoe, and puts a sixpence beneath his foot."

Stories illustrative of *Eolas a' Chomuis* are numerous throughout the Highlands. Our Irish cousins have stories on this point akin to our own. The belief in this malific Charm still exists. Those who profess to know something about it say that in anticipation of a marriage where it is intended to have recourse to it, three running knots are prepared. The party carrying out the Charm attends the marriage service, and listens intently until the priest says the passage in the ritual commencing "Ego te conjungo," &c. Instantly these words are uttered by the priest, the "charmer" pulls both ends of the cord and makes the knot fast. The unlucky bridegroom never regains his virility until the treble knot is unloosed!

A somewhat curious parallel to our Highland and Irish stories is told in the part of the Apocryphal New Testament called the "First Gospel of the Infancy of Jesus." I cannot do better than quote the opening verses of Chapter VII. :—

"They" (*i.e.*, the Virgin Mary and Jesus) "came afterwards to another city, and had a mind to lodge there.

"Accordingly they went to a man's house, who was newly married, but by the influence of sorcerers could not enjoy his wife.

"But they lodging at his house that night, the man was freed of his disorder."

I will now give you

EOLAS A' CHEARTUIS—OR CHARM TO OBTAIN JUSTICE.

This Charm or Incantation was said when a Highlander went to a Court of Justice. A Gaelic proverb says, "*Is cam 's is direach an lagh*"—crooked and straight is the law—implying great uncertainty. In going to law, the litigant presumably believed in the equity of his cause, but being uncertain as to the result, he appealed to the Higher Powers. In the Incantation here given, we have the picture of a man starting from his house to measure swords before a judge with a neighbour—the occupant of the *Baile ud thall*, or "Yonder Town." On leaving his house the litigant says—

Falbhaidh mise 'n ainm Dhia [Dhé]
An riochd iaruinn 's an riochd each [eich],
An riochd nathrach 's an riochd féidh ;
'S treise mi-fhein na gach neach.
'S dubh dha 'n bhail' ud thall,
'S dubh dha 'n bheil na bhroinn :—

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An teanga fo m' bhonn
Gus an till mi 'nall
Mise 'n eala bhàn
'Nam bhan-righinn os an cionn.
Ionnlaididh mi m' aodann,
Mar naoi gathannan greine,
Mar dh'ionnlaideas Moire a Mac
Le bainne bruich.[1]
Meirc air mo bhial—
Seirc na m' aodann ;
Bàs Mhoire mu m' amhuich,
Bàs Chriosda mu m' aodainn,
Teanga Mathair Ios' a' m' cheann ;
Sùil a Chuimirich[2] eatorra,
'S blas meala air gach aon ni
Their mi gu'n tig mi.

Translated—

I go forth in the name of God ;
In the likeness of iron ; in the likeness of the horse ;
In the likeness of the serpent ; in the likeness of the deer ;
Stronger am I than each one [or "than any one else"].
Black to yonder town ;
And black to those who reside therein ;
[May] Their tongues be under my soles [or feet]
Till I again return.
May I be the white swan,
As a queen above them.
I will wash my face
That it may shine like the nine rays of the sun,
As the Virgin Mary washes her Son with boiled milk.
May restraint be on my tongue,
Love on my countenance ;
The palm [or arm] of Mary round my neck,
The palm [or hand] of Christ on my face,
The tongue of the Mother of Jesus in my mouth,
The eye of the Protector between them ;
And may the taste of honey be of every word
I utter till I return.

[1] According to the Lives of the Saints in the Book of Lismore, St Bridget as an infant was bathed in milk.

[2] Cuimreach, S.M. = Assistant (O'Reilly). Cuimriche (often used)= Comairce, protection.

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Here we have a wonderful combination of agencies with the view of attaining a successful end—iron, symbolic of hardness and endurance; the horse, of strength; the serpent, of cunning; and the deer, of swiftness. Then we have the incantator presented to us pure and queenly as the white swan, with loving countenance, with tongue under restraint but uttering honeyed words. He is under the guardianship of the Virgin and her Son.

On reaching the Court, our litigant, with his right foot on the threshold, repeats the following words:—

Gu'm beannaicheadh Dia an tigh
Bho 'bhun gu 'bhragh [fhraigh];
M' fhacal-sa os cionn na bhios a stigh,
'S am facail-se fo m' throidh.

Translated—

May God bless this house
From its floor to its ceiling;
May my word be above all those within,
And their words under my foot.

In a paper on "Druidism," by Mr Macbain in the *Celtic Magazine* [*Vide* Vol. VIII., p. 570], we have a reference to the serpent's egg, and to Pliny's account of it. "A Roman knight was making use of it in Court to gain an unfair verdict, and for this was put to death by Claudius the Emperor." Our old Highlander in *Eolas a' Cheartuis* or Incantation to obtain justice stood somewhat differently from the Roman knight who used the serpent's egg. The parallel is, however, an interesting one.

I will now give you *Eolas na Daire*, a Charm supposed to be efficacious in the case of farrow cows. It does not need much introduction, as it speaks for itself. It is as follows:—

EOLAS NA DAIRE.

Eolas na daire 'rinn Moire 's a Mac.
'S thubhairt Criosda fhein gu'm bu ro-cheart,
Air a' Chiad Luan
'Chur a chruidh gu luath a dhair,
Gun fharlaogh [1] 'n a dheigh
Ach laoigh bhreaca bhoirionn uile gu leir.

[1] The word "Far-laogh" is not generally known on the mainland. It signifies extra-uterine conception—a freak of nature which is fortunately uncommon.

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Translated—

The Charm for the rutting made by Mary and her Son.
Jesus himself said it was right
On the first Monday [at the beginning of the moon ?]
To send the cattle quickly to the bull;
And that no extra-uterine conception should follow,
But spotted female calves.

In some districts, instead of the above, the people say *Duan an Domhnuich*, or the Ode of the *Dies Dominica*. That Ode is as follows :—

DUAN AN DOMHNUICH.

Duan an Domhnuich, a Dhia ghil,[1]
Firinn a's neart Criosda g'ar 'comhnadh.
Di-domhnuich rugadh Moire
Mathair Dhe an or-fhuilt bhuidhe,
Di-domhnuich rugadh Criosda
Mar onoir dhuinne,
Di-domhnuich an seachdamh latha
A dh' orduich Criosda dha-fhein,
Gu cumail na beatha-'mhairionnaich,
'S gu'n leigeadh iad uile 'n anail.
Gun fheum a thoirt bho dhamh no dhuine
No neach a dh' orduich Moire,
Gun sniomh snàth sioda no sròl,
Gun fhuaigheal na's mò ;
Gun chartadh tighe, gun bhuain,
Gun àthadh, gun mhuilionn,
Gun iomradh airm, gun iasgaireachd,
Gun a dhol a mach dha 'n t-seilg
No shnaigheadh dheilgnean Di-domhnuich.

Ge b' e chumadh an Domhnach
Bu chomhnard dha-san, 's bu bhuan,
Bho dhol fodha na greine Di-sathuirn
Gus an eireadh i Di-luain.[2]
Gheibheadh e fiach dha chionn

[1] The expression "a Dhia ghil" is unusual in the Highlands. I find it in the Irish song "The Star of Kilkenny," by Egan O' Rahilly :—

Ar Pheárla óg mná uaisle (a Dhia ghil tabhair buadh dhi)
An chraobh chubhra is uaisle a g-Cill-Chainnich.

[2] In Shetland the period from sunset on Saturday till sunrise on Monday is known as the Hellie or Helzie, *i.e.*, the holy time.

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'S bhiodh toradh an deigh nan crann,
Iasg air amhuinn fior-ghlan saile,
Uisg' an Domhnuich blath mar mhil ;
Ge b' e dh' oladh e mar dhibh
Gheibheadh e slainte gun chron
As gach galar a bhiodh air.
Gal an Domhnuich gun robh luath,
Bean ga pianadh ri an-uair,
Guileamaid moch Di-luain,
'S na guileamaid idir Di-domhnuich.
Fiadh an Domhnuich gun robh luath,
Anns an linge mar a's truagh
Ged thuiteadh an ruadh cheann deth
Biodh e gu Di-luain 'na chadal.
Aig trath-nona Di-luain
Eiridh am fiadh gu ro-luath.
'S airson an dile muigh
Greis a thoirt a sgeula mu chumraidh [1]
Gun eisdeachd ri gleadhraich nan Gall
No ri sgeilearachd coitchionnach.

Ach gart a ghleidheadh air cnoc ard,
'S lighich 'thoirt gu galar garg,
Is bo a thoirt gu tarbh treun
Fada no fagus gu'n robh cheum,
'S eathar a leigeadh fo breid-siuil
Gu tir a duthcha bho h-aineol.
'S ge b' e mheomhraicheadh mo dhuan,
'S a ghabhadh i gach oidhch' dha shluagh,
Bhiodh rath Mhicheil air a cheann
'S a chaoidh cha 'n fhaiceadh e Ifrinn.

In this ode we have a rule of conduct as regards the Sabbath—general directions as to what we are not to do, and a list of what may be called "works of necessity and mercy"—and among these there is the permission to bring a cow to a bull *(tarbh treun)*, no matter how far the distance.[2]

[1] Redemption (or perhaps *comairce*=protection).

[2] The "Yellow Book of Lecan" contains Rules regarding Sunday Observances *(Cain Domnaig)*, which bear a strong resemblance to the above. "The *Cain Domnaig* enjoins, under severe penalties, that every class shall abstain from all kinds of work on Sunday, and that none shall travel on that day ; but wherever one happens to be on Saturday evening, there he should remain till Monday morning. To this there were some exceptions, such as bringing a physician to a sick person, relieving a woman in labour, saving a house from fire, &c." (See Irish MS. Series Vol. I., Part I., page 196).

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An old man in the parish of Ardnamurchan, who professes to know much about cattle, informs me that he learned a different method from a north country *Aireach*, who was known as "Murchadh nan Gobhar." He does not believe in *orrachan*, or Incantations. I describe his alleged method in his own words, and without any comment of mine :—"Na'm bitheadh beathach òg agam," he said, "nach bitheadh a' gabhail an tairbh, so mar a chuirinn a dhàir i, ach cha bu toigh leam neach eile 'bhi coimhead orm :—A' chiad bhò a chithinn a' dol a dhair, sheasainn ri 'taobh agus cho luath 's a sguireadh an tarbh dhi bhleoghnainn i, a's bheirinn am bainne—blàth ás a h-ùgh—do 'n bheathach òg. Chuirinn an sin an cù ris a' bheathach òg, 's an ceann la no dha bhiodh i dhair agam. Is iomadh uair a rinn mi e !"

The foregoing may appropriately be followed by an Incantation which was said when a cow calved—

RANN AN UAIR A BHEIREAS MART LAOGH.

The ceremony was after this fashion :—The dairymaid sat beside the cow, and blowing her breath through her hands towards the cow repeated this Incantation three times :—

"Mart a sid air breith," arsa Peadar.
"Tha mi 'faicinn gu'm beil," arsa Pàl.
"Mar a thuiteas an duilleach o'n chraoibh
Gu'n tuiteadh a sile gu lar."

Translated—

"A cow newly calved," said St Peter.
"I observe that," said St Paul.
Both—"As the leaves fall from the tree
May her milk freely flow."

I will now pass from Incantations taken by themselves to the class of Charms where the aid of Amulets was called in, and commence with the

AIRNE MOIRE, OR VIRGIN MARY NUT.

This nut has been for centuries prized in the Hebrides as an amulet of great value. Martin, in his "Western Islands," mentions several of the virtues it was believed to possess. He calls it a "Molluka Bean." Pennant also refers to it as a native of Jamaica, carried by the rivers to the ocean, and thereafter by winds and the Gulf Stream to the Outer Hebrides. According to Patrick Neill, this nut, which is washed ashore in Orkney, is the seed from the pod of the *Dolichos Urens* of Linnæus. (See Tour in Orkney in 1806, p. 60).

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The name "Airne Moire" I translate as "The Virgin Mary Nut." In modern Gaelic we have *airneag*, "the sloe." The word also occurs in old and modern Irish, and Mr Whitley Stokes translates *arni cumrae*, in the life of St Bridget, in the Book of Lismore, as "sweet sloes."[1]

These nuts are of various colours, but the one most prized has the cross indented on its sides. In Wallace's "Orkney" (1693) we have drawings of four varieties of "Molocco Beans"—one of them having the indented cross. I have in my possession one of these nuts from the Hebrides mounted with a silver cross. It was duly blessed by a cleric—*Pears' Eaglais*—and was believed to be possessed of great virtues. It used to be worn about the neck, just as the scapular is worn at the present time; and every one who thus carried it was believed to be under the special protection of the Virgin Mary. She guarded him from evil courses, led him on the right path, and saved him from various calamities, such, for instance, as a sudden death—*Bas obann.*[2]

While it was believed to afford general protection as above described, it was specially useful in the case of women in travail; and the belief in its efficacy is not yet a matter of the past. There is a tradition in Uist that on one occasion the Virgin Mary and Jesus were travelling on a stormy night. They came to a strange house for shelter. The goodwife of the house was kind and gentle, but the husband was churlish. The wife gave them quarters, much against the husband's wishes. During the night the wife was seized with the pains of labour. Her case seemed to be a critical one, and the assistance of the guests was asked for. Jesus, observing that the woman was in great danger, said—

Seall, a Mhoire, a' bhean
'S i air fòd a' bhais.

Translated—

Mary, behold the woman
In the throes of death.

[1] Batir imda ubla 7 arni cumrae isin cill hisin. (Abundant apples and sweet sloes were in that church).

[2] The above is an account of the virtues of the *Airne Moire* as told me by an Uist crofter. In St Patrick's Hymn, already referred to, we have a similar idea. The hymn, we are told in the prefatory note, is a "Corslet of faith for the protection of body and soul against demons, and men, and vices. Every one who shall sing it every day, with pious meditation on God, demons shall not stand before his face: it will be a defence to him against every poison and envy: it will be a safeguard to him against sudden death: it will be a corslet to his soul after his death."

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The Virgin replied—Seall fhein oirre, a Mhic,
'S ann orra [air do] chomus a tha.

Translated—Son, succour her Thyself,
For Thou hast the power.

Whereupon Jesus told the woman in travail to make the sign of the cross three times, and

A' choinneal a lasadh,
An leanabh a bhaisteadh,
'S a' bhean a bhi slan.

Translated—To light the candle,
To baptise the child,
And that she [the wife] might recover.

The foregoing is the story as told in Uist; and the birth ceremony as now practised is as follows:—The woman in travail takes the *Airne Moire* in her right hand, and repeats the *Ave Maria* three times. Thereafter the midwife, or other woman in attendance, takes the amulet, and with it makes the sign of the cross on the sick woman (air taobh cearr broinn a' bhoirionnaich fo 'n imleig),[1] at the same time repeating the dialogue above given, or the following version of it:—

"Faic a' bhean, a Mhoire,
'Si aig fòd a bhàis."
"Seall fhein i a Mhic,
'S ann agad a tha" ['n cumhachd].
"Cuiribh an gin air an làr,
'S fàgaibh slan a' bhean."[2]

[1] In connection with this ceremony, reference may be made to one of the miracles attributed to S. Ciaran of Saighir. Dioma, Chief of Hy Fiachrach, abducted the beauteous and holy maiden, Bruinneach, from a cell near the monastery, and made her his wife. The Saint applied to Dioma for the restoration of Bruinneach, and his request was in the end complied with. She was pregnant—a circumstance that greatly displeased Ciaran. Thereupon he made the sign of the holy cross on her body, and her burden vanished! The words in the original are:—"Ba thorrach an tan sin í agus nír mhaith le Ciarán é. Do chuir fioghair na croiche césta ar medhon na hingine agus do chuaid an toirrches ar nemhní." (*Vide Silva Gadelica*, Vol. I., p. 5).

[2] Since the above was in type, Prof. O'Growney has sent me, from South-West Cork, a *Rann* to be said for a woman in child-bed. Some of the phrases are the same as those in my Uist version. It is as follows:—

Crios Mhuire an crios,	The girdle of Mary is the girdle,
Crios na d-trí gcros,	The girdle of the three crosses,
Crios gur geineadh Criost ann	The girdle in which Christ was conceived,
A's go rugadh Criost as.	And out of which Christ was born.
Tar, a Mhuire, a's foir an bhean;	Come, Mary, and relieve the woman;
Fóir féin í, 'Mhic, ó's agat a tha,	Do Thou relieve her, O Son, since with Thee it is [*i.e.*, the power],
Go mbeiridh an baisde air an ngein	So that baptism may overtake the child,
A's go d-tigidh an bhean slán.	And the woman may recover.

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Translated—

Jesus—"Mary, behold the woman
In the throes of death."
Mary—"Succour Thou her, O Son,
For Thou hast the power."
Jesus—"May the child be born,
And the woman again be well."

Lady Wilde, in her "Ancient Cures of Ireland," tells us that if an Irish woman is in great danger of death during her confinement, and is not wearing the scapular, she must be invested at once; and the midwife always carries one with her, ready for the purpose (page 71). It would thus appear that the scapular serves much the same purpose in Ireland that the *Airne Moire* does in Uist.

An Incantation somewhat similar to the one above given is used in the West of Ireland. It is entitled "Ortha Mhuire," or a prayer to the Virgin Mary, "a deirtear do mhnaibh in a luighe seoil." I am indebted to Professor O'Growney, who received it from Mr O'Faherty, for the following version of it:—

Dís a casadh orm, Cabhair agus Críost,
Mar rug Anna Muire, a's mar rug Muire Críost,
Mar rug Eilís Eoin Baisde gan dith coise nó láimh',
Fóir air an bhean, a Mhic! Fóir fein í, a Mháthair.
O is tú rug an Mac, tabhair an ghein o'n g-cnaimh;
Agus go m-budh slán a bheidheas an bhean.

Translated—

Two persons I met—Help and Christ:
As Anna was delivered of Mary, and Mary of Christ;
As Elizabeth was delivered of John the Baptist, wanting
neither foot nor hand;
Relieve the woman, O Son! Relieve her, O Mother!
As it was you who brought forth the Son, take the offspring
from the bone [womb];
And may the woman be well.

In connection with the matter of appeals in childbirth to the Virgin Mary, it is interesting to refer to the case of Roderick Macleod, the St Kilda impostor, described by Martin, Buchan, and others. This man, we are told, taught the women of St Kilda a devout hymn, which he called the Virgin Mary's. It was never delivered in public, but always in a private house or some remote

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place, where no eye could see but that of Heaven; and he persuaded the innocent women that it was of such merit and efficacy that any one able to repeat it by heart would not die in childbearing. By means of this hymn the impostor debauched many of the women! He was paid a sheep by every wife who learned it. A copy of this hymn would be interesting. Will any member furnish it?

Appeals to the Virgin Mary by women in child-bed appear to have been universal in Christian countries; and we have an interesting instance of it in "The Lives of the Saints from the Book of Lismore." In "Sgél an da leanabh," given in the introduction, we have the story of two children—one a Jew and the other a Christian—who lived in France. The Christian child induced the Jewish child to go to the temple, and there partake of consecrated bread. The Jewish child afterwards informed his parents what had happened. They were wroth at him, and flung him into the flames [teined ar derglasad] to burn and die. He was left there till burned to ashes. On the morrow his parents found him as if in sleep. In response to their enquiries, the child replied that he was saved by the Virgin Mary ["mathair an aird-rig"—the mother of the high king], and that he was to be a fosterling of hers thenceforward. The parents of the child became Christian. "Ocus is mor in mhirbuil do Mhuire, co nach fetann bean iudaidi tuismhedh a leinimh intan bis co n-idhnuibh no gu n-aitcheann Muire"—(And [so] great is this miracle of Mary's, that no Jewish woman, when she is in birth pangs, can bring forth her child until she entreats Mary).[1]

In Skye the midwives of former times used a certain herb for the same purpose as the Uist women use the *Airne Moire*. An old Sgiathanach recently informed me that his mother, who was a midwife, invariably used the herb when professionally employed. When in attendance on a woman in childbed she went sun-wise round the patient, carrying the herb, and repeating certain words. She was most successful as a sick-nurse. "No woman ever died

[1] In connection with this subject, reference may be made to a strange belief that prevailed in the Highlands till recent times. Pennant mentions it in his Tour in Scotland in 1772, and I cannot do better than quote his words. After referring to the burning of witches near Langholm, he proceeds:—"This reminds me of a very singular belief that prevailed not many years ago in these parts: nothing less than that the midwives had power of transferring part of the primæval curse bestowed on our great first mother from the good-wife to her husband. I saw the reputed offspring of such a labour, who kindly came into the world without giving her mother the least uneasiness, while the poor husband was roaring with agony in his uncouth and unnatural pains.—*Vide* Vol. II., p. 91.

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in her hands," said my informant. "I have heard of cases where the child was dead for four or five weeks, but my mother," said he, "always delivered the woman in safety." She was equally successful in the case of animals. He could not tell me the name of the herb. Perhaps some member of the Society can throw further light on the subject.

In connection with the *Airne Moire* as an amulet, I will read a few lines with regard to St Bridget, from which we see that the "Mary of the Gael" was also regarded as a great protectress. The title is "Sloinneadh Brighde, muime Chriosd"—"The Genealogy of St Bridget, foster-mother of Christ." The lines, which I received from Father Allan Macdonald, are as follows:—

Brighdhe nighean Dughaill Duinn,
'Ic Aoidh, 'ic Arta, 'ic Cuinn.
Gach la is gach oidhche
Ni mi cuimhneachadh air sloinneadh Brighde.
Cha mharbhar mi,
Cha ghuinear mi,
Cha ghonar mi,
Cha mho dh' fhagas Criosd an dearmad mi;
Cha loisg teine gniomh Shatain mi;
'S cha bhath uisge no saile mi;
'S mi fo chomraig Naoimh Moire
'S mo chaomh mhuime, Brighde,

Translated—

St Bridget, the daughter of Dughall Donn,
Son of Hugh, son of Art, son of Conn.
Each day and each night
I will meditate on the genealogy of St Bridget.
[Whereby] I will not be killed,
I will not be wounded,
I will not be bewitched;
Neither will Christ forsake me;
Satan's fire will not burn me;
Neither water nor sea shall drown me;
For I am under the protection of the Virgin Mary,
And my meek and gentle foster-mother, St Bridget.

Some of the phrases in the foregoing have a singular resemblance to certain lines of St Patrick's Hymn, previously mentioned. In the Irish hymn we have the following:—

Crist dommimdegail indíu arneim
Arloscud arbadud arguin.

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Translated—

Christ to protect me to-day against poison,
Against burning, against drowning, against wound.

The *Airne Moire* in Martin's time (circa 1695) was worn round children's necks as an amulet against witchcraft, &c. The white one, he tells us, was particularly prized. I show you a specimen of the white nut. It is not so common as the brown one. Martin says that if evil was intended the nut turned black. That these nuts did change colour, he says, he found true by his own observation, but he could not be positive as to the cause. He then goes on :—

"Malcolm Campbell, steward of Harris, told me that some weeks before my arrival there, all his cows gave blood instead of milk, for several days together. One of the neighbours told his wife that this must be witchcraft, and it would be easy to remove it, if she would but take the white nut, called the Virgin Mary's Nut, and lay it in the pail into which she was to milk the cows. This advice she presently followed ; and, having milked one cow into the pail with the nut in it, the milk was all blood, and the nut charged its colour into dark brown. She used the nut again, and all the cows gave pure good milk, which they ascribe to the virtue of the nut. This very nut Mr Campbell presented me with, and I still keep it by me." (*Vide* page 39).

While referring to the *Airne Moire*, I may mention another foreign nut, gathered on the shores of the outer islands. Martin says that the kernel of this nut, beat to powder and drunk in milk or *aqua vitæ*, was reckoned a good cure for diarrhœa and dysentery ; and the Rev. J. Lane Buchanan states that during his sojourn in the Hebrides (1782-1790), after the kernel was removed, the shell was used as a snuff-mull. It is so used still, and I exhibit a specimen. In former times Hebridean ladies got these nuts mounted with silver, and used them as vinaigrettes. This nut, according to Patrick Neill (Tour in Orkney and Shetland in 1806), is the seed from the great pod of the *Mimosa Scandens* of Linnæus.

Having described the use of the *Airne Moire* at child birth, a Bathing Charm or Blessing may now be given. It is called

EOLAS AN FHAILCIDH,

or, as mainlanders would say, *Eolas an Fhairigidh*. The water having been duly blessed, the woman bathing the infant began by sprinkling a palmful *(boiseag)* of water on its head. As the performance went on, and as each palmful was sprinkled on the child, the following Incantation was repeated :—

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Boiseag orr th'aois [air t'aois],
'S boiseag orr th'fhàs [air t'fhas],
'S air do chuid a ghabhail ort,
'S a chuid nach fhàsadh anns an oidhche dhiot
Gu'm fàsadh anns an latha dhiot
Tri baslaichean na Trianaid Naoimh,
Ga d' dhion 's ga d' shabhaladh
Bho bheum sùl,
'S bho chraos-fharmad nam peacach.

Translated—

A palmful of water on your age [years],
A palmful of water on your growth,
And on your taking of your food;
And may the part of you which grows not during the night
Grow during the day.
Three palmfuls of water of the Holy Trinity,
To protect and guard you
From the effects of the evil eye,
And from the jealous lust of sinners.

While dealing with amulets, I will briefly refer to

ACHLASAN-CHALUM-CHILLE,

or, as it is sometimes called, *Seud-Chalum-Chille*. This plant is described by Lightfoot in his "Flora Scotica" (p 416), where it is given as St John's Wort, *Hypericum Perforatum*. On the Highland mainland the plant is called "Lus-Eoin-Bhaiste." It is also called "Ealabhuidh." This latter word is mentioned in "Miann a' Bhaird Aosda," a poem first published by Ranald Macdonald of Eigg, in 1776. The name "Ealabhuidh," however, is not generally known in the Highlands, as is illustrated by the fact that John Mackenzie, in the "Beauties of Gaelic Poetry," considered it necessary to explain it by means of a footnote.[1] It is also mentioned by Donnchadh Ban in "Beinn-Dobhrainn":—

'S ann do'n teachd-an-tìr
A bha sòghar lea'
Sobhrach 's *eala-bhi*
'S barra neoineagan.

The word is given in O'Reilly's Irish Dictionary, from which the inference may be drawn that it is Irish. The plant, according to the

[1] *Vide* "Beauties of Gaelic Poetry," page 14.

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same authority, is also called "Allas-Mhuire." It is noteworthy that while it is generally named after St John, we have it in the Highlands named after St Columba, and in Ireland after the Virgin Mary.

We have numerous descriptions, in folk-lore books, of the ceremonies on St John's Eve, the plucking of St John's Wort, and the foretelling of one's destiny, much in the same way as our Hallowe'en observances. Bassardus Viscontinus, an old writer, commends that plant, gathered on a Friday, about the full moon in July, and worn round the neck, as a cure for melancholy, and calculated to drive away all fantastical spirits. (*Vide* Burton's "Anatomy of Melancholy"). A German poet beautifully describes the ceremony in connection with this plant, in lines of which the following are a translation :—

The young maid stole through the cottage door,
And blushed as she sought the *plant of power* :—
"Thou silver glow-worm, oh lend me thy light,
I must gather the mystic St John's Wort to-night—
The wonderful herb, whose leaf will decide
If the coming year shall make me a bride."
And the glow-worm came,
With its silvery flame,
And sparkled and shone
Through the night of St John ;
And soon has the young maid her love-knot tied.
With noiseless tread,
To her chamber she sped,
Where the spectral moon her white beams shed :—
"Bloom here, bloom here, thou plant of power,
To deck the young bride in her bridal hour !"
But it drooped its head that plant of power,
And died the mute death of the voiceless flower ;
And a withered wreath on the ground it lay,
More meet for a burial than a bridal day.
And when a year was passed away,
All pale on her bier the young maid lay ;
And the glow-worm came,
With its silvery flame,
And sparkled and shone
Through the night of St John ;
And they closed the cold grave o'er the maid's cold clay.

—(*Vide* Hone's "Every Day Book," Vol. I., p. 427).

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An Uist lady described *Achlasan-Chalum-Chille* to me as growing in out-of-the-way corners in little branches, with pretty yellow flowers—"Bithidh e 'fas 'na ghasan agus dìthein bhoidheach bhuidhe air." To get it growing on the hillside at a time when it was not looked for was considered very lucky, for prosperity and success followed in its train—"Bha buaidh ga ruith." When it was found unsought for, the following Incantation was said :—

Achlasan-Chalum-Chille
Gun sireadh, gun iarraidh,
Mo niarrachd [1] a gheibheadh e.
Buainidh mise duilleach an aigh,
Mar a dh' òrduich an t-Ard-Righ.
Cha 'n 'eil aite 'n teid e suas
Nach buinnigteadh leis buaidh a's clìs.

Translated—

The herb of St Columba [St John's Wort]
Unsought-for, unasked—
Fortunate is he who would get it.
I will cut [or pluck] the Foliage of Prosperity
As commanded by the High King.
Wherever it is put up
It will win victory and command homage.

Another version of the Incantation was thus :—

Achlasan-Chalum-Chille
Gun sireadh, gun iarraidh,
Air sliabh chaorach tha mi ga d' splònadh.

Translated—

St Columba's herb,
Unsought-for and unasked—
On the sheep hills I pluck thee.

Another version was—

Luibh Chalum-Chille gun sireadh, gun iarraidh ;
'S a dheoin Dia cha bhàsaich mi nochd.

[1] Foinne mu 'n iadh bròg
Mo *niarrachd* bean òg air am bi ;
Foinne mu 'n iadh glaic,
Mo *niarrachd* am mac air am bi.

The phrase "Mo niarrachd" is probably equivalent to the Old Irish "Mo n-genar det-siu"="it is happy for you"—now 'is meunar duit-se."

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Translated—

St Columba's herb (or wort) unsought-for and unasked;
And please God, I will not die to-night.

The plant, carried about the person, was believed to act as a charm or protection against all manner of evil agencies. Old persons preserved it in the hope that their cattle and sheep would increase, and that prosperity in general would attend them; while school children carried it in the hope of protecting themselves from the teacher's tawse. The Eigg schoolboy who loitered on the road from school in the evening was satisfied he would escape parental reproof if, in course of his wanderings, he came across this precious herb, unsought-for. On thus finding it he said—

Achlasan-Chalum-Chille, gun sireadh, gun iarraidh;
'S a dheoin Dia cha 'n fhaigh mi achmhasan an nochd.

Translated—

St Columba's herb, unsought-for and unasked;
And please God, I will not be reproved to-night!

Martin mentions the *Fuga Dœmonum*, a term which I may translate "Sgiùrsadh nan Deamhan." I think there can be no doubt that the plant he refers to is St John's Wort. He says:—

"John Morrison, who lives in Bernera of Harris, wears the plant called *Fuga Dœmonum* sewed in the neck of his coat, to prevent his seeing of visions, and says he never saw any since he first carried that plant about him. He suffered me to feel the plant in the neck of his coat, but would by no means let me open the seam, though I offered him a reward to let me do it."—(*Vide* page 334).

Like St John's Wort, the four-leaved Shamrock was believed to be possessed of many virtues, not only in Ireland, but also in the Isle of Man and the Scottish Highlands. When found without seeking, it was considered fortunate, and concerning it the following lines were said:—

Seamrag nan duillean 's nam buadh,
Bu chaomh leam thu bhi fo m' chluasaig
'N àm dhomh cadal na'm shuain.

Translated—

Shamrock of leaves and virtues,
I would wish you to be under my pillow
On my falling asleep.

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TOIR A MACH AN TOBAIDH.

Every Highlander is acquainted with the belief that a witch can take the substance out of her neighbour's milk. The same belief is common throughout Ireland. The idea is not peculiar to the Celts, however; and as illustrating the power attributed to witches, I quote two counts from the indictment charging Marion Pardown, Hillswick, Shetland, 1644, with witchcraft. (*Vide* "Hibbert's Shetland's," p. 282). They are as follows :—

"Item,—Ye the sd. Marion Pardown ar indyttit and accusit for that zeers syne, James Halcro, in Hilldiswick, having a cow that ye alledged had pushed a cow of yours, ye in revenge thereof, by yr. said devilish art of witchcraft, made the sd. James his cow, milk nothing but blood, whereas your awin cow had no harm in her milk; whereupon they suspecting you, shewit the sd. bloody milk to Marion Kilti your servant, quha desyrit of you the same bloody milk for Goddis caus to shew you, and said she houpit the cow sould be weil; quhilk having gotten, and coming therewith to your hous, and shawing it to you, thereafter the cow grew weil, thairby shewing and proving your sd. devilish practyce of the art of witchcraft.

"Item,—Ye, the said Marion, are indyttit and accusit for that you having, a'no 1642 zeirs, hyrit ane cow from Androw Smith, younger in Hildiswick, which ye keepit frae the bull, when she wald have taken bull, and the sd. Andro getting knowledge thereof, causit the same to be brought to the bull and bullit against your will. The next year when she calved, ye by your sd. devilish art of witchcraft, took away her proffeit and milk, sa that she milked nothing but water, quhilk stinked and tasted of sharn a long tyme, till that you comming by the sd. Andro his hous, he suspecting you, caused you to milk her and look to her, after which doing, immediately the sd. cow's milk cam to its own nature,—thairby indicating and sewing your sd. devilish, and wicked, and abbominable airt and practyce of witchcraft,—and quhilk ye cannot deny."

Poor Marion was found guilty, and sentenced to be burned to death.

In the Highlands, similar beliefs as to the powers of witches prevailed; and our Transactions contain an interesting paper by our friend Mr William Mackay, describing the burning of witches in Strathglass. The Rev. Robert Kirk, minister of Aberfoyle in the seventeenth century, gives us in his "Secret Commonwealth of Elves, Fauns, and Fairies," the following account of it :—

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"What food they [the Fairies] extract from us is conveyed to their homes by secret paths, as sume skilfull Women do the Pith and Milk from their Neighbours Cows into their own Chiese-hold thorow a Hair-tedder, at a great Distance, by Airt Magic, or by drawing a spickot fastened to a Post, which will bring milk as farr of as a bull will be heard to roar. The Chiese made of the remaineing Milk of a Cow thus strain'd will swim in Water like a cork. The method they take to recover their milk is a bitter chyding of the suspected Inchanters, charging them by a Counter Charme to give them back their own, in God, or their Master's name. But a little of the Mother's Dung stroakit on the Calves mouth before it suck any, does prevent this theft." The formula described by Isabella Gowdie, a witch, was as follows:—"We plait the rope the wrong way, in the Devil's name, and we draw the tether between the cow's hind feet, and out betwixt her forward feet, in the Devil's name, and thereby take with us the cow's milk."

I am not aware that this mode of treatment existed in the Western Islands. There the people, by means of herbs and appeals to the Trinity and the Church, hoped to ward off the powers of witchcraft. For this purpose a favourite plant was

MOTHAN, OR MOAN.

I do not find the name of this herb in any of our Gaelic dictionaries; but in Lightfoot's "Flora Scotica," page 1131, under the heading "Addition of Erse and Scotch names and plants," we have the following:—"*Pinguicula vulgaris*, Moän, *Gaulis*. Steep-grass, Earning-grass, *Scotis-austral*."

In Uist this plant was believed to be a sure protection against the powers of witches. It should be pulled on a Sunday in this manner:—On finding a place where it grew in abundance, the person going to use it would mark out three small tufts, and calling one by the name of the Father, another by the name of the Son, and the third by the name of the Holy Ghost, would commence pulling the tufts, at the same time saying:—

Buainidh mise am Mòthan,
An luibh a bheannaich an Domhnach;
Fhad 'sa ghleidheas mise am Mòthan
Cha 'n 'eil e beo air thalamh
Gin a bheir bainne mo bhò bhuam.

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Translated—

I will pull the Mòän,
The herb blessed by the Domhnach;[1]
So long as I preserve the Mòän
There lives not on earth
One who will take my cow's milk from me.

The three tufts having thus been pulled, they were carefully taken home, rolled up in a small piece of cloth, and concealed in some corner of the dairy or milk-kist—"ciste-a'-bhainne." I have here a specimen of the Mòän which was in actual use as an amulet.

As an illustration of the virtues of the Mòän as a *Fuga Dœmonum*, my informant narrated a story, which may be briefly given here:—A certain woman in the Western Islands was delivered of a son. As usual on such occasions, there was a group of admiring females round the fire attending to the wants of the new arrival. While thus employed, they saw a shaggy little creature—"creutar beag, loireach"—traddling in at the door. He stood bewildered; and in an instant they heard a voice without, "Nach toir thu mach e?"—(Will you not bring it out?) The "creutar loireach" responded, "Cha toir; cha 'n urrainn mi, 's bainne na bà a dh'ith am Mòthan 'na bhroinn"—(No, I cannot, for the milk of the cow that ate the Mòän is in his stomach). The stranger, who was believed to be a Fairy anxious to "lift" the child before it was baptised, then vanished.[2]

A plant called "Caoibhreachan" was also used as an amulet to protect milk from witches. It was believed that the substance, or "Toradh," could not be taken out of milk in any house where the "Caoibhreachan" was kept under an upturned dish. I do not find this plant mentioned in our Gaelic dictionaries, and I have not been able to get a specimen of it.

In this connection, I may give *Eolas nan Torranan.* I quote it from Dr Stewart's "'Twixt Ben Nevis and Glencoe." Dr Stewart got it from Mr A. A. Carmichael:—

Buaineams' thu, a thorrannain,
Le t' uile bheannachd 's le t' uile bhuaidh;
Thainig na naoi earrannan
Le buaidh an torrannain,
Lamh Bhrighde leam!
Tha mi nis 'gad bhuain.

[1] *i.e.*, the Church.

[2] It was the custom at one time in the Island of Colonsay to put an old shoe to burn at the fireside when a woman was in travail, in order to keep away the fairies that were always ready to "lift" an infant.

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Buaineams' thu, a thorrannain,
Le d' thoradh mara 's tire,
Ri lionadh gun traghadh
Le d' laimh-sa, Bhrighde mhìn,
Calum naomh 'gam sheoladh,
Odhran caomh 'gam dhion,
Is Micheil nan steud uaibhreach
'Cur buaidh anns an ni.
Tha mo lus lurach a nis air a bhuain.

Translated—

Let me pluck thee, Torannan !
With all thy blessedness and all thy virtue,
The nine blessings came with the nine parts,
By the virtue of the Torannan ;
The hand of St Bride with me,
I am now to pluck thee.
Let me pluck thee, Torannan !
With thine increase as to sea and land ;
With the flowing tide that shall know no ebbing,
By the assistance of the chaste St Bride,
The holy St Columba directing me,
Gentle Oran protecting me,
And St Michael of high-crested steeds
Imparting virtue to my cattle,
My darling plant is now plucked.

The Kirk-Session of Kenmore, in Perthshire, had several cases of alleged witchcraft in last century. From the Kirk-Session Records it appears that Janet Macintaggart was charged, on 19th July, 1747, with "Charms and Inchantments," by milking three drops from her neighbour's sheep as a charm to recover the substance of the milk. Her sister Margaret was charged with going into every house in the township with an egg shell having a little milk in it concealed in her breast ; and being asked for what end she did it, she answered that "she heard some of the wives of the town say that to go into their neighbours' houses with an egg shell after this manner was an effectual Charm to recover the substance of their milk which was taken away."

THE EVIL EYE.

The belief in the Evil Eye is of great antiquity. Virgil says—

"*Nescio quis teneros oculus mihi fascinat agnos.*"

"It must be that some evil eye bewitches my tender lambs."

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For centuries this belief has prevailed in the Highlands. We are often told that the Highlanders are superstitious, and in that respect far behind their Lowland neighbours. It may not be amiss to point out here that the belief in the Evil Eye has prevailed in all countries, and prevails even in civilised Greece to the present time. Mr Rennall Rodd, in his interesting volume on the "Customs and Lore of Modern Greece," mentions that all grades of Grecian society believe in it. So much is this the case, that it is acknowledged by the Greek Church, which has prayers against its potency.

The Evil Eye was believed to be the outcome of envy. Admiration implied envy and covetousness, and hence when one praised or admired another, whether man or beast, the object praised was believed to be liable to the effects of the Evil Eye.[1] Thus when a woman admires a child, she frequently says—"Gu'm beannaich an Sealbh thu; cha *ghabh mo shuil* ort;" which may be translated—"God bless you, my eye shall not punish you"—that is to say that the child should not become a victim to the Evil Eye.

This idea also prevails in Orkney and Shetland, where praise of the description above indicated receives the name "Forespoken." If one says to a child "He is a bonnie bairn;" or "Thoo are looking well the day," it is regarded as coming from an "ill tongue," unless the expression "God save the bairn," or some such blessing is also used. When one was "Forespoken" the cure in Orkney was "Forespoken Water"—that is water into which something has been dropped, supposed to possess magical powers, and over which an Incantation has been pronounced—probably a reminiscence of Holy Water. The articles dropped in the water were, as a rule, three pebbles of different colours gathered from the sea shore. The charm was considered most potent when one stone was jet black, another white, and the remaining red, blue, or greenish. An Incantation was then muttered over the water, the reciter commencing by saying the word "Sain," and at the same time making the sign of the cross on the surface of the water. The Incantation was as follows:—

In the name of Him that can cure or kill,
This water shall cure all earthly ill,
Shall cure the blood and flesh and bone,
For ilka ane there is a stone;

[1] In the song of the Kenlochewe Bard already referred to, we have the line—
Buidseachd, a's draoidheachd a's *farmad.*
(Witchcraft, sorcery, and *envy.*)

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May she fleg all trouble, sickness, pain,
Cure without and cure within
Cure the heart, and horn, and skin.

The patient for whom the "Forespoken Water" was prepared had to drink a part of it; the remainder was sprinkled on his person.

A variant of the Incantation is as follows:—

Father, Son, Holy Ghost,
Bitten sall they be
Wha have bitten thee!
Care to their near vein,
Until thou get'st thy health again,
Mend thou in God's name!

The Evil Eye might be described as of a two-fold character. It was (first) believed to be the outcome of an evil disposition on the part of the one who possessed it; and (secondly) many were believed to be possessed of this unhappy faculty, though at the same time they were innocent of any ill design. I have recently met on the West Coast a man who believed that he himself had the Evil Eye, and that he could not look even on his own cattle and admire them without the animals suffering from the baneful influence! In Greece the most popular amulet against fascination, and the consequent Evil Eye, is garlic. A mother or nurse walking out with her children, who may be admired, will at once exclaim "Skordon" (garlic). The ancients seem to have held that a power which grew out of envy was best thwarted by anything which provoked laughter. Accordingly amulets of an indelicate character were worn as charms, and spitting was an universal remedy. In West Connaught recourse is had to spitting at the present day. The person suspected of possessing the Evil Eye is got to expectorate on the person "over-looked." Should the suspected person decline, an effort is made to get a part of his underclothing for the purpose of rubbing the "overlooked" person with it. In the event of these "remedies" proving ineffectual recourse is had to a process called *Conlaoideacha*. According to this method a relative of the "victim" takes a mug and proceeds with it to a certain number of houses. He gets every member of each house visited to spit into the mug. The contents are taken home and the "overlooked" person is rubbed therewith. This is believed to be an effectual cure!

In the Highlands there were amulets worn, such as coins and beads, about children's necks; and the possessor of the Evil Eye was given something as an antidote to his envy. If a neighbour

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entered when a woman was churning, the envious eye of the visitor might affect the performance, and prevent the butter from coming! To avert such a calamity, the visitor got a drink out of the churn. In order to avoid such interruptions, the churning was usually made after bed-time, when the dangers of interruption from without were few.

A certain preparation of water was one of the prevailing remedies when either man or beast was supposed to be suffering from the Evil Eye. At page 126 of Vol. VIII. of the Gaeli Society's Transactions, I gave a short account of the ceremony. According to the description then given, coins of gold, silver, and copper were put into a basin of water. The person performing the *Eolas* repeated the undernoted words over the dish, at the same time blowing the water with his or her breath. The water was then sprinkled on the person supposed to be suffering from the malady. The words given on that occasion were—

'S i 'n t-suil a chi,
'S e 'n cridhe a smuainicheas,
'S i 'n teanga 'labhras;
'S mise 'n Triuir gu tilleadh so ortsa, A.B.
An ainm an Athar, a' Mhic, 's an Spioraid Naoimh.

Translated—

'Tis the eye that sees,
'Tis the heart that thinks,
'Tis the tongue that speaks;
I am the Three to turn this off you.[1]
In the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

So much by way of introduction. I will now proceed with the mode of curing the sufferer from the supposed effects of the Evil Eye, as the same is practised in Uist. In the first place, the performer goes for water, and, if possible, it is taken from a burn across which the living pass, and over which the bodies of the dead are from time to time carried. Having brought the water into the house, he repeats the *Paidir* (*Pater*), and the *Creud* (*Credo*). He then takes a coin, or coins. My informant was not very precise as to the use of the three metals, as stated in the former description, but she significantly added, "Mar is treise 'n t-airgiod 's ann is fhearr e," meaning that the more valuable the coin, the more powerful it is! The coin, or coins, are then, in the name of

[1] Here the name of the afflicted person is to be said.

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the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, put into the water. Thereafter three palmfuls (*tri boiseagan*) are sprinkled, in the name of the Trinity, on the person or animal suffering. The performer then goes with the dish of water to the fireside, and sprinkles three palmfuls on the fire, repeating these words :—

"An till teine farmad ?
Tillidh teine farmad."

("Will fire turn envy ?
Fire will turn envy").

The remainder of the water is then taken outside, and spilled on a flag, or rock—on what my informant called "air lic dhìlinn," that is, a flag or rock *in situ*.

At the present day, in Perthshire, a similar performance is gone through when a tenant finds that a ram of his flock is sick. The practice, doubtless, has its origin in the belief that such sickness was due to the Evil Eye. The ceremony is somewhat similar to that described in the first charm ; and it was considered a good sign if the coin adhered to the bottom of the vessel containing the water.

A version I received from Skye a few years ago seems simple Three coins—half a sovereign, half a crown, and half a penny—were put into the water ; the performer knelt on his right knee, and sprinkled the water on the sufferer, at the same time repeating the following Incantation :—

Chi suil thu :
Labhraidh bial thu ;
Smuainichidh cridhe thu—
An Triuir ga do dhion—
An t-Athair, am Mac, 'san Spiorad Naomh.
(name here)
A thoil-san gu'n robh deanta. Amen.

Translated—

Eye will see you,
Tongue will speak of you ;
Heart will think of you—
The Three are protecting you—
The Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.
A. B.
His will be done. Amen.

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There was a general dread of the Evil Eye among old Skyemen in former times. As an antidote against it, the following verse was repeated when washing in the morning :—

Gu'm beannaicheadh Dia mo shuil,
'S beannaichidh mo shuil na chi :
Beannaichidh mise mo nabuidh,
'S beannaichidh mo nabuidh mi.

Translated—

Let God bless my eye,
And my eye will bless all I see ;
I will bless my neighbour,
And my neighbour will bless me.

Another Skye remedy was the sign of the cross. When a person believed to have the Evil Eye, or to be unlucky to meet *(droch comhdhàlaiche)*, was met anywhere, the person dreading any evil result from the meeting made the sign of the cross on the ground, between himself and the untoward person. This practice prevailed till recent times, and may still be observed by old persons—a very significant survival of Catholic times in a purely Protestant district.

Another supposed cure for the Evil Eye was "Eolas a' chronachaidh." An account of it is given in Mackenzie's "Beauties," page 268, where it is stated that as the Incantation was sung a bottle of water was being filled, and the performer so modulated his voice as to chime with the gurgling of the liquid as it poured into the vessel. The Incantation, as given in the "Beauties," is as follows :—

Deanamsa dhutsa eolas air suil,
A uchd 'Ilie Phadruig Naoimh,
Air at amhaich is stad earbuill,
Air naoi conair 's air naoi connachair,
'S air naoi bean seang sithe,
Air suil seana-ghille, 's air sealladh seana-mhna ;
Mas a suil fir i, i lasadh mar bhigh,
Mas a suil mnath' i, i bhi dh' easbhuidh a cich,
Falcadair fuar agus fuarachd da 'fuil,
Air a ni, 's air a daoine,
Air a crodh 's air a caoraich fein.

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Translated—

Let me perform for you a charm for the evil eye,
From the breast of the holy Gil-Patrick [St Patrick],
Against swelling of neck and stoppage of bowels [tail],
Against nine "Conair" and nine "Connachair,"
And nine slender fairies,
Against an old bachelor's eye and an old wife's eye.
If a man's eye may it flame like resin,
If a woman's eye may she want her breast,
A cold plunge and coldness to her blood,
And to her stock, to her men,
To her cattle and her sheep.

I have already referred to the spitting cure as practised in Ireland. I am indebted to Mr D. O'Faherty, the collector and compiler of that entertaining volume, "Siámsa an Gheimhridh," for the following Irish incantation against the Evil Eye:—

An Triur a chonnaic mé agus nár bheannuigh mé—
An t-suil, an croidhe, agus an beul;
An Triur a chuir mise do mo chosaint—
An t-Athair, an Mac, agus an Spiorad Naomh.
Air a bha beannach, no air a chaoraibh lachtnach,
Agus mar bh-fuil rud air bith eile aige,
Faoi na chroidhe agus faoi 'na easnachaibh fein,
Uaimse agus ó gach duine bhaineas liom fein.

Translated—

Three who saw me and did not bless me—
The eye, the heart, and the mouth;
The Three whom I placed to protect me—
The Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.
(May the effects of the Evil Eye fall)
On his horned cattle, on his dun sheep;
And if he has nothing else (may he feel its effects)
Under his own heart and under his own ribs
From me and from each person who belongs to me.

Mr Leland, in his "Gypsy Sorcery," makes several references to the Evil Eye. At page 51 he describes the Gypsy ceremony against the influence of the Evil Eye, and as it is somewhat akin to our Highland method, I may briefly repeat it here. A jar is filled with water from a stream, and it must be taken *with*, not *against* the current. In it are placed seven coals, seven handfuls

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of meal, and seven cloves of garlic, all of which are put on the fire. When the water begins to boil, it is stirred with a three-forked twig, while the gypsy repeats a rhyme of which the following is a translation :—

Evil eyes look on thee,
May they here extinguished be,
And then seven ravens
Pluck out the evil eyes.
Evil eyes (now) look on thee,
May they soon extinguished be.
Much dust in the eyes,
Thence may they become blind.
Evil eyes now look on thee,
May they soon extinguished be ;
May they burn, may they burn
In the fire of God !

It is pointed out that the seven ravens in the rhyme are probably represented by the seven coals ; while the three-pointed twig, the meal, and the garlic, symbolise lightning.

From the Evil Eye one naturally turns to what is called in the Outer Hebrides,

EOLAS AN T-SNAITHNEAN, OR THE TRIPLE THREADS.

I have previously pointed out that Pennant, in his Tour, refers to Virgil's description of the charms used by the shepherd Alphesibœus, and the use of triple threads in connection with these :—

"*Necte tribus nodis ternos, Amarylli, colores ;*
Necte, Amarylli, modo et 'Veneris' dic 'vincula necto.'"

("Twine in three knots, Amaryllis, the three colours ;
Twine them, Amaryllis, and say, 'I am twining the bonds of love'").

Eolas an t-Snaithnean is simply the Charm or Incantation of the threads, that is, the triple threads ; and it is worthy of note that the triple threads of Virgil were white, rose colour, and black. In Virgil's Ecologue VIII., line 73, we have a clear reference to the *Eolas* of the triple threads :—

"*Terna tibi hæc primum triplici diversa colore*
Licia circumdo."

("These three threads distinct with three colours
I wind round thee first "),

thus proving the great antiquity of this charm. It is still very popular in the Western Islands, and is used as a Charm against

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the effects of the Evil Eye, and also against Witchcraft. The rite observed is as follows:—

First, the *Paidir* or *Pater* is said. Then the following Incantation:—

Chi suil thu,
Labhraidh bial thu;
Smuainichidh cridhe thu.
Tha Fear an righthighe[1]
Gad' choisreagadh,
An t-Athair, am Mac, 's an Spiorad Naomh.

Ceathrar a rinn do chron—
Fear agus bean,
Gille agus nighean.
Co tha gu sin a thilleadh?
Tri Pearsannan na Trianaid ro-naomh,
An t-Athair, am Mac, 's an Spiorad Naomh.

Tha mi 'cur fianuis gu Moire, agus gu Brighde,
Ma 's e duine rinn do chron,
Le droch run,
No le droch shuil,
No le droch chridhe,
Gu'm bi thusa, ([2]) gu math
Ri linn so a chur mu 'n cuairt ort.
An ainm an Athar, a' Mhic, 's an Spioraid Naoimh.

Translated—

An eye will see you,
Tongue will speak of you,
Heart will think of you,
The Man of Heaven
Blesses you
The Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

Four caused your hurt—
Man and wife,
Young man and maiden.
Who is to frustrate that?
The three Persons of the most Holy Trinity,
The Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

[1] Righ-theach is an ordinary word for Heaven in the old Irish manuscripts.
[2] Here say the name of person or beast to be cured.

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I call the Virgin Mary and St Bridget to witness
That if your hurt was caused by man,
Through ill-will,
Or the evil eye,
Or a wicked heart,
That you [A.B.] may be whole,
While I entwine this about you.
In nomine Patris, &c.

The whole of the foregoing Incantation is recited three times, and, during the recital, the *Snaithnean*, or tri-coloured triple thread, is entwined about the beast's tail (*am bun an earbuill*) with triple knots. If the beast is to recover, the person applying the *Snaithnean* feels himself or herself becoming ill! If the first recital does not prove efficacious, the rite may be performed two or three times.

Another *Eolas*, which appears to be an abbreviation of the *Snaithnean*, is

EOLAS FOIREIGNIDH.

It may be used for man or beast, with or without the *Snaithnean*, in all sorts of illnesses of a sudden nature, and is much in request. It is as follows :—

Ceathrar a laidheas an suil,
Fear a's bean,
Gille agus nighean,
Triuir ga shodhadh sin,
An t-Athair, am Mac, 's an Spiorad Naomh.

From the Evil Eye and the *Snaithnean* one naturally turns to

THE SIAN, OR SEUN.

Macalpine defines *Seun* as "an amulet to render a warrior invulnerable." The word is also used in an ecclesiastical sense as meaning blessed, or sacred. We have the expression "Am biadh gun *sianadh* air do shiubhal," signifying that a person had partaken of food without blessing it or saying grace. In the song of the Kenlochewe Bard, previously referred to, we have the mother-in-law presented to us at the bed of the young couple as "Ga'n *sianadh* 's ga'n teagasg;" that is, blessing them and teaching them. The *Sian*, as explained by Macalpine, and also in a more elaborate form by the learned authors of the Highland Society's Dictionary, is simply a protective charm; and it is of interest to note that the belief in it is by no means confined to

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the Highlands. In the work by Mr Rennall Rodd, previously referred to, we have an account of a certain Cretan warrior who, in our own time, pretended to be invulnerable in virtue of a medal of St Constantine, which he wore suspended round his neck. Twice this warrior was hit without being wounded, but a third time he received a serious wound in the neck. This, however, did not shake his confidence, and he attributed his mischance to the fact that in pursuance of a vendetta he had determined in his own mind to take the life of a fellow-Christian, whereupon the saint had withdrawn his protection. This reminds one of the legend that the Highland warriors who were under a *sian* at Culloden had only to remove their plaids and shake off the bullets! The Clanranald chief who was killed at Sheriffmuir was believed to be "charmed" or under a protective spell; and an Uist tradition has it that he was treacherously killed by a man from his own estates who had encountered his ire for some misconduct, and who joined his opponents. This man knew that his chief was protected by a *sian*, and, putting a silver coin into his gun, shot him.

The *sian* of the Clanranalds was, according to tradition, a piece of the club moss *(Garbhag an t-sleibhe)*, and a piece of the caul or *currachd-rath* (Fortunatus's cap). These were put into the pocket of the warrior when departing for battle, either by a virgin or an unmarried man. At the same time an Incantation of some kind was gone through. With regard to the club moss, the following lines were said :—

Fhir a shiubhlas gu h-eutrom,
Cha 'n eagal dhuit beud no pudhar,
'S garbhag-an-t-sleibhe bhi air do shiubhal.

I was not able to find the Incantation of the *Sian* in Uist, but I give here a set which Mr Macbain obtained from one of his mainland friends. The "charmer" and his *protege* go to a retired spot. The recipient of the charm there goes on his knees; the "charmer" lays his hand on the other's head; and, with eyes shut, utters the Incantation. Going round him sunwise, or *Deiseal*, he repeats these words twice :—

Sian a chuir Moire air a Mac ort,
Sian roimh mharbhadh, sian roimh lot ort,
Sian eadar a' chioch 's a' ghlun,
Sian eadar a' ghlun 's a' bhroit [bhraghaid] ort,
Sian nan Tri ann an Aon ort,
O mhullach do chinn gu bonn do chois ort.

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Sian seachd paidir a h-aon ort,
Sian seachd paidir a dha ort,
Sian seachd paidir a tri ort,
Sian seachd paidir a ceithir ort,
Sian seachd paidir a coig ort,
Sian seachd paidir a sia ort,
Sian seachd paidir nan seachd paidir dol deiseal ri deagh uarach ort, ga do ghleidheadh bho bheud 's bho mhi-thapadh.

Translated—

The charm that Mary placed on her Son be on you,
Charm from slaying, charm from wounding,
Charm between pap and knee,
Charm between knee and breast on you,
Charm of the Three in One on you,
From top of head to sole of foot,
Charm of seven paters once on you,
Charm of seven paters twice on you,
Charm of seven paters thrice on you,
Charm of seven paters four times on you,
Charm of seven paters five times on you,
Charm of seven paters six times on you,
Charm of the seven paters of the seven paters going sunwise in lucky hour on you, a-keeping you from harm and accident.

Going anti-sunwise, or *tuaitheal*, he repeats the following one :—

Clogaid na slainte mu d' cheann,
Cearcall a' Chumhnaint mu d' amhaich,
Uchd-eididh an t-sagairt mu b' bhroilleach;
Ma 's ruaig bho 'n taobh-chuil,
Brogan na h-Oighe ga d' ghiulan gu luath.
Sian nan Tri ann an Aon ort,
Bho mhullach do chinn gu bonn do shail,
Agus sian paidir nan seachd paidir
Dol tuaitheal is deiseal, deiseal is tuaitheal,
Gu d' ghleidheadh bho d' chul
Bho luaidhe 's bho chlaidheamh,
Bho lot 's bho mharbhadh,
Gu uair a's am do bhais.

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Translated—

The helmet of salvation about your head,
The ring of the Covenant about your neck,
The priest's breastplate about your breast;
If it be rout on the rear,
The shoes of the Virgin to take you swiftly away.
Charm of the Three in One on you
From crown of head to sole of foot,
And the charm of the pater of the seven paters
A-going anti-sunwise and sunwise, sunwise and anti-sunwise,
To protect you from behind,
From lead and from sword,
From wound and from slaying,
Till the hour and time of your death.

The *Caul—Currachd-rath*, or, as it is frequently called, *Cochull* —is a membraneous cap in which the head of a child is sometimes enveloped when born. Such children are believed to be the special favourites of fortune. In addition to the caul being regarded as a protective charm in battle, it is also believed to afford protection from drowning, and is looked upon as an article of considerable marketable value among sailors. The belief in its efficacy is by no means confined to the Highlands or even to Scotland. The French in Mauritius attach special virtue to it, and offer it for sale at fancy prices. In 1835, an advertisement in the following terms appeared in the *Times* newspaper:—"A child's caul to be disposed of, a well-known preservative against drowning, &c. Price 10 guineas." Mr Moore refers to this superstition in the Isle of Man, and states that a caul has been advertised for sale in a Liverpool newspaper in 1891. Professor O'Growney informs me that advertisements to the same effect appeared frequently in Irish newspapers till about ten years ago.

In connection with this matter, it may be mentioned that the cowl of the monk—Gaelic, *cochull*; Latin, *cucullus*—was also used as an amulet in battle. In the life of St Columba, in the Book of Lismore, we are told that Columcille sained, or consecrated, a cowl for the warrior Aed Slaine, and said that he (the warrior) would not be slain so long as that cowl should be on him. Aed Slaine went upon a raid. He forgot his cowl. He was slain on that day. Again, in Adamnan's Life of Columba (Book II., ch. 25), mention is made of Findlugan donning the Saint's cowl to protect him from the spear-thrusts of Manus Dextera! St Columba is said to have written the MS. known as the *Cathach*. His kindred, the O'Donnells, always brought it with them to battle, and it was their

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custom to have it carried three times round their army before fighting, in the belief that this would ensure victory. Hence the name *Cathach*, or Battle-book.

In Ireland an Incantation known as *Marthainn Phadraic* serves the purpose of the Highland *Sian*. According to tradition, St Patrick recited the words over the corpse of one Aine, and stated that any one hearing it would escape many dangers. The language of the *Marthainn* is very old, and several passages have crept into it which are very obscure. The Irish peasantry attribute great virtues to it, and are very anxious to have it. Irish soldiers in foreign lands have been known to send for it in the belief that it would preserve them from being shot. For the following version of it I am indebted to Mr D. O'Faherty, editor of *Siamsa an Gheimhridh*. He took it down from the recitation of an old man named Michael Joyce :—

Claoidhtear seang ; feart fial ; Aine 'sa g-cill go buan
Go buadh na g-craobh nglaise ; sùgh na géige géire, gile.
Go m-budh subhach suan mise agus ingean Aonghuis Sailm Ghlais,
Gidh nar budh ionann duinn rún creidimh
Gan d' ár ngrádh againn air an talamh acht Aine.
Beannachd leis an anam a bhi i g-corp Aine ní h-áille
Agus gach neach a m-beidh an Mharthainn seo aige
Beannachd d' ár ngrádh-ne.
Is aoibhinn a folt, go bláth fionn-bhuidhe, 'O a h-aghaidh séimhe corcardha.
Agus a corp a bhi seimh cumhra.
Beul ó fáth focal níor facas a riamh ó náire.
Aine óg ní h-áille go feart a claoidh !
Níor chualaidh si a riamh an aithrighe i g-cruth, ó ghuth ná ó cháilidheachd.
Fagamuid na buadha-so mar ar n-aithne ; buadh conganta, buadh treise ;
Buadh feise le fionn mnaibh ; buadh dubhán na tri rígh riaghalta faoi
Aine, ní bheidh morán cin air d'aithrighe ma éistir le combradh—
An té a dearfadh mo laoidh go méar-bhinn glan uasal
Rachfaidh an t-Aingeal ar neimh leis 's níor bh' eagal do Rígh an Uabhair.
An té a dearfadh na Marthainn-so tri theinntibh na h-Eireann
Már 's iata fosglochar iad eidir chruadh ghlais agus geibhinn.
An té a déarfadh na Marthainn-so a' dul i m-broid ná i bh-fiach
Geobhfadh se riar a ghasdail 's beidheadh cach a fosgailt 'sa riar air.
An té dearfadh na Marthainn-so a' dul i g-cath no i g cliathra
Tiocfaidh as fó 'n arm gaisge agus a fheoil dearg iata.

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An té a dearfadh na Marthainn-so a' dul i d-teach an óil
Tiocfaidh as gan gleo anachain ná trobloid.

An té a dearfadh na Marthainn-so a dul i g-cinn mna moille
Is maith an turus chum Dé i g-cinn ceile agus cloinne.

An té a dearfadh na Marthainn-so a' dul i g-cinn mna naoidhin
Tiocfaidh as slán meanmnach gun doilghe ó na saothar.

An té a dearfadh na Marthainn-so a' dul i luing no i bh-fairge
Tiocfaidh as gan bathadh tuinne ná anachain.

An té a dearfadh na Marthainn-so i dul i dteach nuadh
An-marbhadh ni thiocfaidh as cho 'ad a's bheidheas cleith fo dhion air.

Sgriobhta leis na scolaraibh go feart a dtir fior, ar feadh an domhain uile
Agus go feart i g-Cille Claoidhte. Neamh ag gach neach dá meabhróchaidh í
Agus air aon neach na ceiltear í.

Mise Padraic na bfeart a tháinic 'mo Ard-Easbog go h-Eirinn
Mo chúmaidh ioltain uasail, chaill mi moran de mo leargas.

Mise Pádraic príbhleideach léighim gach uile aithne; sin buaidh aig mo Mharthainn go bráth, mar tá si sgríobhta ó láimh na scolaireadh ó thuis an domhain, ó feart í g-Cill Claoin,
Gur bud e Marthainne Phadraic is ainm di i nGaedhilige, is é mo chreach bhrónach gan í ag gach aon neach; agus dá m-beidheadh si sgríobhta í dtri fearsanna-deug aige bheurfá d'anam o ifrionn saor leat. Amen.

From the concluding line it is obvious the Incantation was originally in thirteen verses. My informant, however, could not supply it in flowing verse, and it is above recorded as narrated by Joyce. The Gaelic reader will be able to read and understand the most of it without difficulty. It may be added that there are several versions of this *Marthainn*, and that in all of them there are phrases not understood by the reciters themselves. Some of the constructions, *e.g.*, *Go* = With, in line 2, have been obsolete for upwards of a century.

I will next briefly refer to the charm called

FATH FITHE.

In Vol. VIII., p. 127, there is a brief description of the *Fath Fithe*. As the text will show, this Charm is somewhat comprehensive in its character :—

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Fa' fithe cuiream ort
Bho chu, bho chat,
Bho bhò, bho each,
Bho dhuine, bho bhean,
Bho ghille, bho nighean,
'S bho leanabh beag,
Gus an tig mise rithisd.
An ainm an Athar, a' Mhic, 's an Spioraid Naoimh.

Translated—

A magic cloud I put on thee,
From dog, from cat,
From cow, from horse,
From man, from woman,
From young man, from maiden,
And from little child,
Till I again return.
In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

The *Fath Fithe*, according to tradition, was a favourite charm with hunters, for it enabled them to make physical objects invisible to the ordinary eye. They could come from the forest laden with the spoils of the chase, but their enemies would see them not. In more recent times it was believed that smugglers protected themselves in this way from the most vigilant of Excise officers. It is to be feared, however, that the art has been lost! The expression *Fath Fithe* is now seldom heard; but there can be no doubt that in former times it was considered a protective charm of some kind. In the verses from the Kenlochewe Bard, already referred to, the word is used, but there obviously in the sense of *rosad* as previously described. The power to bring about darkness is an old belief among the Celts, and an interesting instance of a charm used in this connection is given in the Book of Lismore.

In the life of Senan (Book of Lismore) we are told of a wizard (Druidh) who went to the King (Mac Tail) saying he would make a charm (sén) to Senan the Saint, and that thereby he would either die or leave the land. The King was glad with this; and the wizard went to Senan and "sang incantations against him and said 'leave the land with this spell.'" The saint replied, "I will resist thy spell;" and he prevailed. Then the wizard "brought darkness over the sun, *so that no one in the island could see his comrade's face.*" Senan, however, charmed the darkness.

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In that case we have the wizard using his charm or *Sen*, and the superior powers of the Church getting the better of the powers of darkness. Similarly in the same work we are told of a cloud of darkness enveloping the mother of St Findchua from her pursuers, and thus saving herself and the saint, who was not then born, from the rapacity of an enemy.

Again, the Tuath de Dannan were credited with the power of raising storms and causing darkness. When the invading Milesians reached Ireland, the Tuath de Dannan, by means of sorcery, enveloped the Island in mist, and hid it from their view. A sorcerer among the Milesians directed them how to act, and they eventually landed.

The *Fath Fithe* is believed to be equivalent to the modern Irish *Feth Fia* or the *Faeth Fiada* of Old Irish. The Hymn of St Patrick, previously referred to, is called "Faeth Fiada," or, to use the language of the original text, "7 Faeth Fiada ahainm" (and Faeth Fiada is its name). In modern Irish it is called "Luireach Phadruig," or, St Patrick's Corslet; but anciently it was called by this name and the name *Fiada* or *Feth-fiada*, as we gather from the following passage in the Tripartite Life of the Saint :—

"Tunc vir sunctus composuit illum Hymnum patrio idiomate conscriptum, qui vulgo *Feth-Fiadha*, et ab aliis *Lorica* Patricii appellatur; et in summo abinde inter Hibernos habetur prætio; quia creditur, et multa experientiâ probatur, piè recitantes ab imminentibus animæ et corporis præservare periculis."

Translated—

"Then the Holy Man composed that Hymn in his native speech, which is commonly called *Feth-fiadha*, and by others the Breast-plate or *Lorica* of Patrick; and it is held from thenceforward among the Irish in the highest regard; because it is believed—and proved by much experience—to preserve those that piously recite it from dangers that threaten them in soul and body."

We have already seen, when dealing with the *Airne Moire*, how the hymn was regarded as a protective charm; and we are told that Patrick, when ambuscades were set against him by Loegaire, sang it in order to shield and guard himself and his clerics. Patrick and his followers on singing this hymn seemed to the ambuscaders to be wild deer with a fawn after them.

I have stated that the *Fath Fithe* charm is extensive in its scope. I subjoin another, equally extensive, from the Sister Isle, kindly sent me by Professor O'Growney :—

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Ortha a chuir Colum Cille, le toil Righ Neimhe,
Air bheim suil, air urchoid [1] chnuic, air shealg agus ae ;
Leigheas o neimh air an m-ball dubh ta in aice an chleibh,
Air an leic le a m-bogthar na h-easbaidh ;
Le grasa Mhic Mhuire, a's le mìorbhuille Mhic De
Leigheas na colainne, 's an anal a bheith reidh.

Translated—

A prayer which Columcille gave, by the will of the King of Heaven,
Against the Evil Eye, against hurt from the Fairies, against spleen and liver ;
A cure from Heaven for the black spot near the breast,
For the flag (?) by which the *Evil* (King's Evil) is softened,
Through the favour of the Son of Mary, and the miracle of the Son of God
A cure for the body and for smoothness of breathing.

THE FAIRIES.

"Who were the Fairies" is a question which I need not discuss, but the following genealogy of them is interesting :—

Fairies loq.—

Cha 'n ann do Shiol Adhamh sinn,
'S cha 'n e Abraham ar n-athair ;
Ach tha sinn de mhuinntir an Athàr Uaibhrich,[2]
Chaidh fhuadach a mach a Flaitheas.

Translated—

We are not of the seed of Adam,
And Abraham is not our progenitor ;
But we are the offspring of the Haughty Father,
Who out of Paradise was driven.

I need not here dilate on the wondrous feats attributed to the Fairies. People blessed themselves, and prayed the Almighty to protect them from Fairies, but I have not come across any Anti-

[1] This word, although not in common use in Gaelic, is found several times in Scripture, and in rhymed versions of the Psalms. It is used by Mac Mhaighstir Alastair in the song entitled "Tinneas na h-urchaid," and commencing

"Gu bheil tinneas na h-urchaid
Air feadh Airdnamurchan."

[2] Compare this designation, "Athair Uibhreach," with "Righ an Uabhair" in Marthainn Phadraic.

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Fairy charms in the Highlands. Here is one from the West of Ireland :—

Against Fairy Influence.

Gabhamuid lé n-a g-coimirce,
A's diultamuid da n-imirte,
A g-cul linn 's a n-aghaidh uainn,
As ucht phaise 's bais ar Slanuightheora.

Translated—

We accept their protection,
We repudiate their (evil) tricks,
(May) their back (be) to us, their face from us
Through merit of the passion and death of our Saviour.

Here is another Anti-Fairy Charm sent by Mr O'Faherty from the west of Connaught :—

Ortha an aghaidh na daoineadh maithe.

A Mhic Dé a g-cluin Tu an gleó[1] so chugainn go mor san ghleann.
Cluinneann a Mhathair; na bidheadh eagla ort.
Go sabhailidh an t-Athair beannuighte sinn,
Go m-budh dún daingean an dún a bh-fuilmid ann.
Go m-budh sluagh dall an sluagh seo chugainn.
O! a Iosa Criosta agus a Mhaighdin ghlormhor
A chidheas ar n-dochar agus ar n-dioghbhail,
Go sgaraidh tu do chochal beannuighte taruinn!
Amen.

Mr Moore in his Folklore of the Isle of Man gives the following Manx Charm against the Fairies :—

A Charm against the Fairies.

Shee Yee as shee ghooinney,
Shee Yee er Columb-Killey
Er dagh uinnag, er dagh ghorrys,
Er dagh howl joaill stiagh yn Re-hollys.
Er kiare corneillyn y thie
Er y voayl ta meé my lhie
As shee Yee orrym-pene.

[1] Tumult, disturbance.

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Translated—

Peace of God and peace of man,
Peace of God on Columb-Cille,
On each window and each door,
On every hole admitting moonlight,
On the four corners of the house,
On the place I am lying,
And peace of God on myself.

I now pass to the class of charms intended to effect cures, and commence with

EOLAS NA RUAIDHE, OR RASH, OR ROSE.

The *Ruaidhe* or Rash was a swelling of the breast of a woman or the udder of an animal, causing retention of the milk, and consequent pain. There are various charms for the cure of this ailment. I will begin with a version given by an Uist crofter. The formula was thus:—The performer, in the first place, got a small round stone, and rubbed the swelling with the side of it which was next the ground. At the same time, he repeated the following Incantation:—

Seall Thusa, Chriosd,
A' chioch so 's i air at;
Innis sin do Mhoire,
O'n 's i rug am Mac.
Ruaidhe eadar atan,
Fag an leabaidh so;
Thoir leabaidh eile ort;
Cuir am bainne anns a' chich,
Cuir an Ruaidhe anns a' chloich,
'S cuir a' chloich anns an lar.

Translated—

Behold Thou, O Christ,
This breast and it [so] swollen;
Tell that to Mary—
'Twas she who bore the Son.
Rash between swellings,
Leave this bed;
Betake thyself to another bed;
Send the milk from the breast;
Transmit the Rash to the stone,
And (through) the stone to the ground.

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The idea here intended to be conveyed was that by means of the Incantation the disease was transmitted from the breast to the stone, and from the stone to the ground.[1] In gypsy sorcery, similar examples may be found where pain is sent into its medical affinity, and so on, back to the source from which it came.

One of the modes of curing the *Ruaidhe* in cattle was thus :— Get a stone from a March-burn—*allt criche*—rub the swollen teat with the same, and say these words :—

A Chriosda, leigheis am mart.
Leigheis fhein i, 'Mhoire—
'S tu rug am Mac.
Gu'm a slan an t-ùgh ;
'S gu'm a crion an t-at ;
'S a Ruaidhe mhor atar iotar,
Fag an t-aite so 's tair as !

Translated—

O Christ, heal the Cow.
Heal thou it, O Mary—
Thou brought'st forth the Son.
May the udder be healed ;
May the swelling cease ;
And thou great swollen dry Rash,
Leave this place, and be off.

Another method for curing the *Ruaidhe* in a cow, was thus :—

A burning peat was taken and held under the udder ; the teats were squeezed in succession, and the milk allowed to drop until the peat was partially extinguished. The smoke caused by the milk and the burning peat was considered medicinal. As the cow was being thus milked, the following Incantation was said :—

Fhaic thu, Chriosd, a' chioch
Gur a h-i tha goirt ;
Innis sin do Mhoire mhin,
Bho 'n 'si-fhein a rug am Mac.
Gu 'm bu slan a' chioch,
Gu 'm bu crion an t-at.
Teich ! teich ! a Ruaidhe !

[1] Professor O'Growney writes me that the mention of the stone in the above formula reminds him of a Donegal phrase. In English, when describing some calamity we would avert from ourselves, we say "God save the mark." In Donegal the corresponding Gaelic is "A shamhail i gcloich"=(May) its like (be) in a stone.

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Translated—

Christ, behold the teat—
In which there is [great] pain—
Tell that to gentle Mary,
For she brought forth the Son.
Whole may the teat be,
Let the Rash depart—
Rash ! away ! away !!

The following is an Irish charm for the cure of the *Rash*, given me by Mr O'Faherty :—

Ruadh ramhar cùl connáideach.
D' iarr Colm Cille de Chathach :
Cia'rd a leigheasfas an Ruadh ?
Nimh a chuir air g-cùl agus an t-at a chur air lár,
Gan de bhrigh 's an Ruadh, an oiread a bheith slán.

Old superstitions have a wonderful vitality. Since the above was written, a striking illustration of the belief in Charms at the present day came under my notice. According to the *Ulster Examiner* of 17th December, 1892, Owen M'Ilmurray was indicted before the Ulster Winter Assizes, for that he, on 25th July, 1892, feloniously did kill and slay one David Archer, Lurgan. According to the evidence, Archer had suffered from bronchitis and erysipelas, or rose, for some time, and was attended by two doctors. The medical treatment did not appear to satisfy Archer and his friends, for they sent for M'Ilmurray, who was a noted "Charmer" in the district. The "Charmer" undid the bandages which the doctors had put on Archer's leg, and rubbed the leg with flour and butter. "While doing this he whispered a charm, which witness (Rebecca Jane Archer, a sister of the deceased) could not hear." "Her brother (the deceased) asked him (M'Ilmurray) for God's sake to try the charm, and prisoner said he was doing it in God's name." Archer, however, died, and the doctors attributed the death to the interference with the medical treatment. The jury disagreed, and the prisoner was set at liberty.

THE TOOTHACHE.

I will now briefly deal with the toothache charm. The formula seems to be the same, or substantially the same, in all Christian countries, and has reference to St Peter sitting on a marble stone suffering from the toothache, and the Lord passing by and healing him. The words of this charm are met with all

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over the Highlands, but strange to say they are rarely met with in Gaelic. This is probably owing to the fact that few old Highlanders can write Gaelic. Even in the districts where English is practically unknown to the old people, one gets this charm in English. In Badenoch it is called *Toisgeal*[1] and formerly it was only known to a few who professed to cure toothache. The words were written on a small piece of paper, the paper folded up and handed to the sufferer, who was not on any account to open it up or see what was written thereon. It was then sewn up in a part of one's under-garments, and worn till it crumbled away. So long as the paper lasted the person enjoyed immunity from toothache! If the sufferer had the curiosity to read the formula contrary to the direction of the learned "Charmer," then the *Toisgeal* lost its virtue, and the toothache might at any moment return!

As already stated, the formula is generally met with in English. Here is a Gaelic version from the Island of Barra:—

Shuidh Peadar air Cloich Mharbhail. Thainig Criosda ga ionnsaidh 's dh' fhoighnich e dheth "de 'tha 'cur ort a Pheadair?" Labhair Peadar, "Mo Thighearna 's mo Dhia, tha 'n Deideadh." Fhreagair Iosa 's thuirt e, "Eirich suas, a Pheadair, 's bithidh tu slan; 's cha tusa sin a mhain ach duine sam bith a labhras na briathraibh so na m' ainmsa cha 'n fhairich e ciod e 'n Deideadh."

The following is a copy of the English version of the *eolas* copied in South Uist. It may be taken as a rough translation of the above, or *vice versa*:—

Peter sat upon a marble stone weeping. Christ came by and asked, "What ails thee." Peter answered and said, "My Lord and my God, my tooth *toothache*;"[2] and the Lord said unto him, "Rise up, Peter—not for you alone, but all who will carry these lines in my name shall never feel what is the toothache. In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost."

A Latin version of the above, from the Maclagan MS., was published by Mr Macbain in the *Highland Monthly* (Vol. III., 292). As it is substantially the same as the above, I annex it here:—

[1] *Toisgeal* is obviously a corruption of the word *soisgeal*, a gospel. According to Croker (Fairy Legends, p. 360), "a 'gospel' is a text of Scripture written in a peculiar manner, and which has been blessed by a priest. It is sewed in red cloth, and hung round the neck as a cure or preventive against various diseases."

[2] *i.e.*, My tooth is aching.

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"Petrus sedit ex marmorum lapis Dominus Noster venit et Dixit petrus quid te gravit. petrus respondit dominus Meus Caput et Dentes meos vexant me Dominus Noster Dicat surge petras salva tu non solum tu sed etiam omnia qui teneant haec mea dicta per virtutem De haec verbis Dominus Noster et in ejus Nomine Dice tuus pestis non moleste te Detri—Minius Pratrus."

Here is an Irish version of the Toothache Charm, or, as it is called, *Ortha an diaidh-fhiacal* :—

Chuidh Peadar go sruth for-lan.
Thainic Chriost os a Chionn,
"Cia'rd sin ort, a Pheadair?"
"O! m' fhiacail ata tinn."
"Eirigh, a Pheadair, a's bi slan,
Ni tusa acht feara Fail."

Aon duine a gheillfeas na a dearfadh an ortha,
Ni beidheadh i n-diaigh na h-ortha diaidh in aon deud amhain.
An ainm an Athar agus an Mhic agus an Spioraid Naoimh.
Amen.

Translated—

St Peter went to a full running stream;
Christ went to meet him, and said,
"What ails thee, Peter?"
"O! my tooth doth ache."
"Arise, Peter, and be well—
Not you alone, but also the men of Innisfail."

Any believing in or saying this Incantation
Will not have toothache thereafter in even one tooth.
In nomine Patris, &c. Amen.

The Irish peasant of Connemara has his English version of the Toothache Charm. The following is from Galway :—

Peter sat upon a marble stone,
And unto God he made his moan.
Christ came by, and asked "What's the matter?"
"O! my Lord God, a toothache."
"Rise up, Peter, and not you alone,
But every one who believes in this charm
Shall never be troubled with a toothache."
In the name of the Father, &c.

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In Orkney the following variant of the Incantation, and called "Wormie Lines"—"the worm" (the equivalent of our Gaelic *cnuimh*) being an Orkney name for toothache—is used :—

Peter sat weeping on a stone ;
Christ went by saying "Why dost thou moan."
Peter said, "My tooth doth ache so sore."
Christ said, "He shall trouble thee no more—
From tooth and yackel worm shall flee,
And never more shall trouble thee."

These lines were written on a slip of paper and worn on the person.

I lately noted, from the recitation of an Eigg crofter, a Tooth-ache Charm, which has a certain resemblance to the Irish one above given. It is as follows :—

Labhair Calum-Cille nan Orth'
Ann an ordag dheas mo Righ—
Air chnuimh, air dheidh, air dheideadh—
Air dheideadh a' ghalar-chinn.
Labhair Peadair ri Seumas—
"Cha choisich, cha mharcaich,
Cha teid mi
Leis an deideadh a tha m' cheann."
Labhair Criosda ris na h-Ostail—
"Cha bhi 'n deideadh is an Rann-s'
'S an aona cheann."

Translated—

Columba of the Incantations
Spoke in the right thumb of my King—
On worm, on ache, on toothache—
On toothache, the head-disease.
Peter spoke unto James—
"I'll walk not, I'll ride not,
I'll move not
Through the toothache in my head."
Jesus said to the Apostles—
"Toothache and this Incantation
Will not exist together in the same head."

Mr Moore does not give a Manx version of the Charm. He, however, gives the following formula, which was to be used in the same manner as the *Toisgeal* :—

Saint Peter was ordained a saint
Standing on a marble stone,
Jesus came to him alone—

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And saith unto him, "Peter, what makes thee shake?"

Peter replied, "My Lord and Master, it is the toothache." Jesus said, "Rise up and be healed, and keep these words for my sake, and thou shall never more be troubled with toothache."

At the base of Ben Marival, in North Uist, there is a well, locally known by the name of Tobar-Chuithiridh, which is believed to cure toothache. Sufferers from this ailment still frequent the lonely well, and, according to ancient custom, leave offerings. On bended knees they drink the water, repeating the following words:—

"Tha mise a' cromadh sios an ainm an Athar, a' Mhic, 's an Spioraid Naoimh; 's a dol a dh' fhàgail cradh mo chinn anns an tobar nach traogh a chaoidh. Amen."

Translated—

I bend down, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and I am to leave the torments of my head in the well, which never will run dry."

Certain wells in Knoydart are believed to possess toothache cures. Pilgrimages are made to them, and offerings left at them, as in the case of Tobar-Chuithiridh.

I conclude with a Shetlandic Toothache Charm. In its style it bears a striking resemblance to one of the Charms against the rash above given. It is as follows:—

A Finn came ow'r from Norraway [1]
Fir ta pit tcot'ache away—
Oot o' da flesh an' oot o' da bane,
Oot o' da sinew an' oot o' da skane,
Oot o' da skane an' into da stane,
An' dere may du remain!
An' dere may du remain!!
An' dere may du remain!!!

At page 124 of Vol. VIII. of the Transactions of the Gaelic Society, I gave an account of

[1] Mr W. T. Dennison informs me that this Incantation was also common in Orkney, but beginning thus—

T'ree Finnmen cam' fae der heem i' de sea,
Fae de weary worm de folk tae free,
An' dey s'all be paid wi' de white monie!

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as I wrote it down from the recital of a Lochbroom woman some 25 years ago. I will now lay before you the story of this *Eolas*, as I recently heard it in the Outer Hebrides:—"One night," said my informant, "Jesus and the Blessed Virgin Mary came to a house among the hills to escape persecution. The good-wife gave them food. Darkness was coming on, and the Virgin Mary proposed that they should stay there all night. The good-wife (Bean-an-tighe) replied that she could not give them shelter as her husband was inhospitable, and would be angry if he found any strangers under his roof. The Blessed Virgin asked to be favoured with any quiet corner till morning, and the good-wife consented. Jesus and the Virgin (*Iosa 's Moire 'Mhathair*) were permitted to lie on some chaff which was in a corner, and the good-wife put a covering over them. The good-man came home at nightfall, partook of food, and went to bed. During the night he was seized with a violent pain in his side. His life being despaired of by his wife, she called in the assistance of the visitors (and as my informant pathetically added "*Bu mhath iad a bhi ann*"). Christ then came to the assistance of the sick man, saying "Leighisidh mise thu—'s e greim na seilge 'th' ort." ("I will heal you—you suffer from the stitch or spleen or bowel seizure'"). Jesus then said:—

Bean shoirbh.
'S fear doirbh;
Criosd 'na laidhe air a' chalg,
Caisgidh e dhiot an t-sealg.

Translated—

A gentle wife,
A churlish husband;
Christ lying on the awns [of corn],
That will stop the *sealg* [colic or spleen].

Another Uist version is—

Bean fhial, 's duine borb,
Criosd 'na laidhe air a' chalg—
Eirich a's leighis an t-sealg.[1]

[1] Professor O'Growney informs me that in the county of Meath he heard the lines—

Bean mhín, fear borb,
Mac Dé 'na luidhe 'san g-colg.

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Translated—

A hospitable wife, a churlish man ;
Christ lying on the awns—
Arise and cure the spleen.

The version of the story given in Vol. VIII. is substantially the same as the one now narrated. It is noteworthy, however, that in Protestant Lochbroom there is no mention of the Virgin Mary ; whilst the version obtained in Catholic Uist assigns to her a prominent place. The Lochbroom version of the formula was as follows :—

An ainm an Athar, a' Mhic 's an Spioraid Naoimh !
Duine fiat a muigh,
Bean fhial a stigh,
Criosd 'na laidhe air calg an lin—
'S math an leigheas air an t-seilg sin.

Translated—

In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
A fierce, churlish man without,
A hospitable wife within,
Christ a-lying on the beard of flax—
That is a good cure for the spleen.

It will be noted that one of the Irish charms above given deals with the *sealg*. There is also a charm for the "Stitch" in a MS. of the 11th century given in Cockayne's Leechdom and Wort-Cunning of Early England :—

With gestice.

"Writh Cristes mæl and sing, thriwe thaer on this and pater noster longinus miles lancea ponxit dominum et restitit sanguis et recessit dolor. For a stitch. Write a cross of Christ and sing over the place this thrice."

CASGADH FOLA, OR STAUNCHING BLOOD.

The belief prevailed that some of the old Highlanders could staunch blood. Horse gelders were supposed to be particularly skilled in this art ; but I failed to get any specimen of the Incantations in Uist.

I will, however, give one which I recently noted from Duncan Campbell, an old Strathconan man, now resident in Beauly. He learned it from a sister of Donald Macdonald, the *Bard Conanach.*

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The Bard, it appears, was celebrated for his Charms and Incantations,[1] and taught the present one to his sister. She taught it to my informant, who firmly believes in its efficacy, and who says that he has on many occasions staunched blood through its instrumentality! The formula is as follows :—Having mentioned the name and surname of the person to be cured, the "Charmer" repeated the *Ortha* thus—

Paidir Mhoire—h-aon.
Paidir Mhoire—dha.
Paidir Mhoire—tri.
Paidir Mhoire—ceithir.
Paidir Mhoire—coig.
Paidir Mhoire—sia.
Paidir Mhoire—seachd.

"Ciod e is brigh dha na seachd Paidrichean?"
"Is brigh dha na seachd Paidrichean—
Obainn fala air feirg, fala deirg.
Reoithidh t' fhuil, 's duinidh do lot
Mar shileadh Moire air Criosd."

Translated—

The Pater of the Virgin Mary—one.
The Pater of the Virgin Mary—two.
The Pater of the Virgin Mary—three.
The Pater of the Virgin Mary—four.
The Pater of the Virgin Mary—five.
The Pater of the Virgin Mary—six.
The Pater of the Virgin Mary—seven.

[1] In local tradition he is represented as having been particularly successful both in letting and in staunching blood. On one occasion, while at the harvest in the Lothians, he lodged with a weaver, who was also a noted phlebotomist. A full-blooded damsel of the district called on the weaver in order that he might let her blood. He tried all his skill, but the blood would not come. Whereupon the Bard took the damsel in hand, and, taking her by the small of the wrist, squeezed an artery, with the result that blood squirted in the weaver's face. The weaver desired the Bard to show him his method. The Bard responded in verse :—

Cha tugainn eòlas mo lamh fhein
Dh' fhear bhualadh slinn no chuireadh i ;

Lot thu gairdean na nighean dhonn
'S cha 'n fhac thu steall de 'n fhuil aice ;

'S an uair a theannaich mi caol a dùirn
Mu 'dha shuil bha 'n fhuil aice.

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"What is the significance of the seven Paters?"
"The significance of the seven Paters is—
The fierce (running) of blood—
(Blood) in anger,
Blood (flowing) red.
Thy blood will freeze; thy wound will close,
As Mary's dropped on Christ!

Here is an Irish charm to staunch blood, received from Mr O'Faherty. It is called *Ortha Coisgthe Fola.* I have not previously found a Gaelic Incantation with Latin words:—

Is beannuighthe ainm an fhir a sgoilt croidhe an laoigh ghil;
Is maith an nidh thainic as, fuil, fion, agus fioruisge.
An ainm a n-Athar, stop an fhuil; *Sancti,* taraidh dá chobhair.
Spiritus Sancte, stop an fuil ta ag teacht go treun.

Translated—

Blessed is the name of him who split the heart of the White Calf;
Precious is that which came therefrom—blood, wine, and pure water.
In the name of the Father, stop the blood; Saints, come to his aid;
Holy Spirit, stop the blood that is spurting so strongly.

Our Manx cousins had several such incantations, and one of them may as a specimen be quoted here from Mr Moore's book:—

Pishag dy Sthappal Roie Foalley.

"Three deiney chranee haink voish y Raue—Chreest, Peddyr, as Paul. Va Creest y Chrosh, yn uill echey shilley, as Moirrey er ny glioonyn yn ec liorish. Ghow for jeu yn er-obbee ayns e lau yesh, as hayrn Creest crosh [1] harrish eh. Three mraane aegey haink harrish yn ushtey, dooyrt unnane jeu, 'seose'; dooyrt nane elley, 'fuirree'; dooyrt yn trass-unnane 'sthappyms fuill dooinney ny ben. Mish dy ghra eh, as Chreest dy yannoo eh, ayns ennym yn Ayr, as y Vac as y Spyrryd Noo."

Translated—

Charm to Stop Running of Blood.

"Three godly men came from Rome—Christ, Peter, and Paul. Christ was on the cross, his blood flowing, and Mary on her knees close by. One took the enchanted one in his right hand, and Christ drew a cross over him. Three young women came over the

[1] On repeating "crosh" you are to draw a cross with the thumb of the right hand over the bleeding part.

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water, one of them said 'up,' and another said 'stay,' and the third one said, 'I will stop the blood of a man or woman.' I to say it, and Christ to do it, in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost."

Another charm to staunch blood among the Manx was in Latin, and was as follows:—

A Charm to Stop Bleeding.

Sanguis mane in te,
Sicut Christus in se;
Sanguis mane in tua vena,
Sicut Christus in sua pœna;
Sanguis mane fixus,
Sicut erat Christus,
Quando fuit crucifixus.

Our toothache *Toisgeal* was on no account to be seen by the sufferer. Similarly, the above was not to be translated, as translation deprived it of its efficacy!

In Orkney the following couplet, repeated three times, was the formula to stop blood:—

Stem, blood stem! I say to thee!
In the name of Him that hung on a tree!

BITE OF A MAD DOG.

The bite of a mad dog was naturally much dreaded. Indeed the bite of any dog was. The mad dog was invariably destroyed. In the case of another dog, it sometimes sufficed if water was put on the animal's teeth, and the wound washed with this water, or *Ioc-shlainte* (Health-Restorer) as it was called. Our Irish cousins dealt with the case of the mad dog in their Ancient Laws. In the Book of Aicill we are told "There is no benefit in proclaiming it (the mad dog—*cu confaid)* unless it be killed; nor though it be killed unless it be burned: nor though it be burned unless its ashes have been cast into a stream."

The matter was also dealt with in the Irish charms. Here is a specimen used in West Connaught:—

Coisgim cu air mire,
Cuirim nimh air neimh-bhrigh,
'Se dubhairt Padruig uair no tri,
In nomine Patris, et filii.

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Translated—

I check a mad dog,
I make the poison of no effect,
Saith St Patrick twice or thrice,
In nomine Patris, et filii.

EOLAS NAN SUL.

There were *Eolais* not only to heal sore eyes, but also to remove a mote from the eye. Martin mentions that "there be women" who have the latter art, "though at some miles distant from the party grieved." The *Eolas* for sore or weak eyes was practised till recent times in many parts of the country. The *modus operandi* was this :—A dish was filled with clean water, and the performer, bending over it, and spitting into it, repeated the following Incantation :—

Obaidh nan geur shùl,
An obaidh 's fearr fo 'n ghrein ;
Obaidh Dhe, an t-Uile Mhor.
Feile Mhairi, feile Dhe,
Feile gach sagairt 's gach cleir,
Feile Mhicheil nam feart,
'Chairich anns a' ghrein a neart.

Translated—

A charm for sore smarting eyes—
The best charm under the sun ;
The Charm of God, the All-Great ;
Charm of Mary, Charm of God,
Charm of each priest and each cleric,
Charm of Michael the strenuous,
Who bestowed on the sun its strength.

The following story, relative to the experiences of a certain Parliamentary candidate for a Highland constituency, and which has not before been published, is interesting :—

In course of a house-to-house canvass, the candidate learned that a certain voter knew *Eolas nan sùl*. The candidate mentioned to this voter the case of a relative who suffered from sore eyes. The rural ophthalmist offered his services, and at once began to prepare a "lotion." Pouring a quantity of water into a dish, the charmer bent over it, repeating an Incantation nine times—and each time he spat in the water. The "charmed water" was thereafter poured into a bottle and presented to the candidate, to be used as an eye-wash by his relative.

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It is greatly to be feared that any possible virtues the contents of the bottle might contain were never tested.

In connection with the spitting in the water, see the story of the healing of the man who was born blind, as narrated in the ninth chapter of the Gospel of St John. The sixth verse of that chapter is as follows :—

"When he [Jesus] had thus spoken, he *spat on the ground and made clay of the spittle*, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay."

A' CHIOCH—THE UVULA.

When the palate fell (*A' chioch 's an amhaich*), the ceremony of *Togail na Dail-chuaich* was resorted to. As the plant called *Dail-chuaich* was pulled, a certain Incantation was said, but I have been unable to get it. Will any reader furnish a copy?

Another cure for "raising the uvula" was the *Ciochag-thraghad*. This small, red, uvula-like marine polypus was gathered when the tide was out, tied in a piece of cloth, and hung on the crook above the fire, in the name of the Trinity, mentioning the name of the sufferer from the *Cioch-shlugain* at the time. As the *Ciochag-thraghad* shrank under the influence of the fire, so it was believed that the uvula of the sufferer would resume its normal size![1]

KING'S EVIL.

Here is an Irish charm for the King's Evil :—

Marbhuigheann m' ortha easbaidh bruth—
Eachmhaidh chneádha, eachmhaidh chneádha,
Gach cnuimh i n-déid a's gach péist
A mbidheann nimh ann.

In ainm an Athar agus an Mhic agus an Spioraid Naoimh.

Translated—

My charm doth kill the hot evil—
The gnawing worm, the gnawing worm;
Every worm in tooth, and every monster
Of poisonous nature.

In the name of the Father, &c.

[1] This is interesting alongside with a Welsh formula for curing warts. Certain wells in Wales cured warts. Professor Rhys states the formula thus :—"On your way to the well, look for wool which the sheep had lost. When you had found enough wool, you should prick each wart with a pin, and then rub the wart well with the wool. The next thing was to bend the pin and throw it into the well. Then you should place the wool on the first white-thorn you could find, *and as the wind scattered the wool the warts would disappear*" !!!

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ROINN A' MHAIM, OR "APPORTIONING" OF SWOLLEN GLANDS.

The *Màm*, or, as it is called in some districts, *Màn*, is a swelling of the glands in the armpit, or at the upper end of the thigh—*glaic na sleisde*.[1] *Mam* is probably the correct form—the swelling being so called from its resemblance to *mam*, a round hillock.

The popular method of curing the *Màm* was to have it divided or apportioned—*roinn*—over a number of *mams* or hillocks in different parts of the country. The mode of carrying out the *roinn*, or apportioning, was as follows:—The person who practised the *Eolas* took a darning needle and laid it across the *Mam* or swelling. He then took an axe and placed its edge on the needle, thus forming a cross, and at the same time saying "*So air Mam*"—(naming a particular *mam* or hillock). The needle was then shifted, the axe placed across it again, and that portion of the swelling assigned to another *mam*; and so on for nine or twenty-seven times, according to the method of the performer.

The *roinn* or apportioning nine times was considered sufficient to cause the swelling to subside—*dol air ais*. Nine times was the number usually practised both on the Mainland and in most of the Western Islands, but the correct number, according to a Colonsay man, was three nines, or twenty-seven. In apportioning the swelling over twenty-seven *mams*, the sign of the cross was made on the floor with the edge of the axe at the ninth, eighteenth, and twenty-seventh *mam* enumerated below, the operator at the same time saying—"*Tha so air a' Mham Mhor Dhiurach, 's e 's an deicheamh.*"

I am indebted to my friend Professor Mackinnon, of Edinburgh University, for the following list of *Mams* mentioned in the rite as the same is performed in Colonsay. It was recently noted from the recital of Alexander Macneill, an old Colonsay man, who thought it was required by the Professor for some desperate case that had defied the skill of all the Edinburgh doctors!

The performer, taking the needle and the axe, and going through the action above described, went over the twenty-four *mams* thus—

1. So air Màm a' Scriodain [Mull].
2. So air Màm an t-Snodain.
3. So air Màm Dhoire Dhuaig [Mull].
4. So air Màm Chloiche Duinn.

[1] *Màm*=A certain bile, or ulcerous swelling of the armpit; *ulcus quœdam, ulcus in axilla*.—Highland Society's Dictionary.
Màn=A brook bile, or an ulcerous swelling under the arm.—Macfarlane's Vocabulary.

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5. So air Màm an t-Struthain.
6. So air Màm an t-Siosair.
7. So air Màm an t-Seilisteir.
8. So air Màm Shiaba [Mull].
9. † (on the floor) So air a' Mham Mhor Dhiurach, 's e 'san Deicheamh.
10. So air Màm Astal [Islay].
11. So air Màm Choireadail [Islay].
12. So air Màm a' Bhatain.
13. So air Màm Shraoisnich.
14. So air Màm an t-Siobarsaich.
15. So air Màm Chataibh [so pronounced in Colonsay, where Caithness is understood].
16. So air Màm na Mororaig.
17. So air Màm Chloiche Gile.
18. † So air a' Mham Mhor Dhiurach, &c.
19. So air Màm na Doire Uaine [Doire is Feminine in Colonsay].
20. So air Màm na Doire Liath (*léith*).
21. So air Màm Arichdhuairich [so pronounced by reciter. *Airidh Ghuaire* in Mull is suggested].
22. So air Màm Choire-na-h-eirea'a [Jura].
23. So air Màm Ghribinn [Mull].
24. So air Màm Aisginis [S. Uist ?]. [1]
25. So air Màm Chlachaig [Mull].
26. So air Màm Choire Chriostal.
27. † So air a' Mham Mhor Dhiurach, &c.

Members of this Society may be able to identify the locality of several of these *Mams*.

Macneill firmly believes in the efficacy of his method of curing the *Mam*; and he occasionally puts his skill to the test in Colonsay.

An Arisaig Man informed me that his father used to "apportion" the *Mam*, and was always successful in effecting cures. "I never saw his method fail," said my informant; "and I have often seen the swelling burst during the operation with the hatchet!"

Donald Maceachan, an old cottar in South Morar, still professes that he can cure such swellings as I have described. Recently I met him, and he was good enough to describe his method. He learned the art in his youth, from an old man, and has practised it from time to time ever since. Shortly before

[1] There is a hill in Caignish called Cnap-Aisginis.

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my interview with him, he had cured a young man who had a *Mam* on the thigh—*am bac na sleisde*—and that so speedily that on the day after the operation no trace of the swelling was left!

In Arisaig and Morar the number of *Mams* mentioned is nine, and not twenty-seven, as in Colonsay. There is no reference to the Great Màm of Jura, to which so much importance is attached in the Colonsay formula. All the *Mams* mentioned are in Knoydart; and Maceachan, in order to convince me of the accuracy of his list, stated that he himself had lived for a long time in that district, and took a special note of the *Mams* mentioned in his formula. His own words were—"Bha mi-fhein a' fuireach fada ann an Cnoideart 's chum mi beachd air na Màim." Like the Psalmist, he well might say—

> "I to the *Hills* will lift mine eyes,
> From whence doth come mine *Aid!*"

The method of "apportioning the *Mam*" in Arisaig and Morar was as follows:—The edge of the axe was placed, in the name of the Trinity, on the swelling. Lifting the axe, the operator then struck its edge into a block of wood—generally the door-step (*maide-buinn* or *stairsneach*)—at the same time saying, "So air Màm-Chlach-ard"—*i.e.*, "This part of the swelling I apportion to Màm-Chlach-ard"—and so on, until each of the nine hills mentioned in the formula received its due portion! If one recital did not prove successful, the rite might be performed two or three times.

The following is the formula as practised by Donald Maceachan:—

1. Tha mi 'cur so air Màm-Chlach-ard [above Loch-Nevis].
2. Tha mi 'cur so air Mam-Uchd [Knoydart].
3. Tha mi 'cur so air Mam-Uidhe [Knoydart].
4. Tha mi 'cur so air Mam-Bharasdail [Knoydart].
5. Tha mi 'cur so air Mam-Eadail [Knoydart].
6. Tha mi 'cur so air Maman-Odhar [Knoydart].
7. Tha mi 'cur so air Mam-Suidheag [Knoydart].
8. Tha mi 'cur so air Mam-Unndulainn [Knoydart].
9. Tha mi 'cur so air Mam-Lìdh [Knoydart].

AN TROMA-LAIDHE, OR NIGHTMARE.

The following is a Charm against Nightmare, or *Troma-laidhe*. It was to be said as soon as the person awoke:—

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Aisling a chunnaic mi 'n geilt,
Thug Criosd oirre deagh bhreith ;
Dh'innis Peadar i do Phòl,
'S thubhairt Pòl gum bu mhath.

Translated—

A dream I saw in fear—
Christ passed on it good judgment ;
Peter told it to Paul,
And Paul said it was well.

The above is from Barra. Here is a similar one from the Arran Islands, Galway :—

An Triur is sine, an Triur is óige,
An Triur is treise i bh-Flaithis na Glóire—
An t-Athair, an Mac, 's an Spiorad Naomh,
Do m' shábhail 's do m' ghardail o nocht go d-ti bliadhain,
Agus an nochd fein. An ainm an Athar, &c.

Translated—

The Three oldest, the Three youngest,
The Three strongest in the Heaven of Glory,
The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
To save and guard me from to-night for a year,
And to-night itself. In nomine Patris, &c.

SPRAINS.

Eolais for sprains are numerous, and are known as *Eolas an t-sniomh*, or *Eolas air sgiuchadh feithe*. They were applied in the case of man, and also in the case of the lower animals. The performer took a worsted thread in his or her mouth, muttered the incantation, and tied the thread round the injured limb, where it was kept until worn out. In Norse mythology, we have an account of Woden's adventure with his steed, which slides and wrenches its joint, till successive Galdersongs, or Charms, restore it. It was the same idea with the Highland Charms, Christ, and sometimes St Columba or St Bridget, being mentioned as the author of the cure. Here is a specimen from Uist :—

Dh' eirich Criosda moch
Maduinn bhriagha mach ;
Chunnaic e cnamhan 'each
Air am bristeadh ma seach ;

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Chuir e cnaimh ri cnaimh,
Chuir e smuais ri smuais,
Chuir e feoil ri feoil,
Agus feith ri feith ;
Chuir e craicionn ri craicionn :
Mar a shlanaich Criosda sin
Gu 'n slanaich mise so.

Translated—

Christ arose early and went forth
One fine morning,
He beheld his horses' bones
Broken cross-wise.
He put bone to bone ;
He put marrow to marrow ;
He put flesh to flesh ;
He put sinew to sinew ;
And put skin to skin.
As Christ healed these,
May I heal this.

The following is a version of the *Eolas* from Lochbroom :—

Chaidh Criosda mach
'S a' mhaduinn mhoich,
'S fhuair e casan nan each,
Air am bristeadh mu seach.
Chuir e cnaimh ri cnaimh,
Agus feith ri feith,
Agus feoil ri feoil,
Agus craicionn ri craicionn ;
'S mar leighis Esan sin,
Gu 'n leighis mise so.

Translated—

Christ went forth
In the early morn
And found the horses' legs
Broken across,
He put bone to bone,
Sinew to sinew,
Flesh to flesh,
And skin to skin ;
And as He healed that,
May I heal this.

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Here is another version from Uist :—

Dh' eirich Calum-Cille moch,
Fhuair e cnamhan a chuid each
Cas mu seach
Chuir e cnaimh ri cnaimh,
Feoil ri feoil.
Feithean ri feithean,
Seiche ri seiche,
Smuais ri smuais ;
A' Chriosd mar leighis Thu sid,
Gu 'n leighis Thu so.

It is unnecessary to translate this Incantation. It is in effect the same as the two preceding ones, with this difference that St Columba takes the place in the latter taken by Christ in the two former. It is noteworthy that the healing of broken bones by St Columba is mentioned by Adamnan in his Life of the Saint. The holy virgin Maugina, daughter of Daimen, who lived in Clochur, we are there told, when returning from Mass, stumbled and broke her thigh quite through. Columba ordered a disciple named Lugaid to visit her. As Lugaid was setting out on his journey, the Saint gave him a little box, made of pine, saying—"Let the blessed gift which is contained in this box be dipped in a vessel of water when thou comest to visit Maugina, and let the water thus blessed be poured on her thigh ; then at once, by the invocation of God's name, her thigh-bone shall be joined together and made strong, and the holy virgin shall recover perfect health." Lugaid carried out his master's directions, and we are told that in an instant Maugina was completely healed by the closing up of the bone.—(See *Vita Sancti Columbæ*, Lib. II., cap. v.)

In connection with St Columba's directions to Lugaid, John Roy Stuart's "Prayer" may be mentioned. Stuart sprained his ankle after the battle of Culloden, and while hiding from the Redcoats composed the verses known as "Urnaigh Iain Ruaidh" ("John Roy's Prayer"). According to this prayer, his ankle was to be cured by the Charm which St Peter made for St Paul. Seven *Paters*, in the name of Priest and Pope, were to be applied as a plaster ; while another Charm was to be applied in the name of the Virgin Mary, all-powerful to cure the true believer.

Ni mi 'n ubhaidh rinn Peadar do Phàl
'Sa luighean air fas-leum bruaich ;
Seachd Paidir 'n ainm Sagairt a's Pàp

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Ga chur ris na phlasd mu 'n cuairt.
Ubhaidh eile as leath Moire nan Gras
'S urrainn creideach dheanamh slan ri uair.

—*Vide* Mackenzie's "Beauties of Gaelic Poetry," p. 268.

Our Norse neighbours in Orkney and Shetland also had their Charms for the cure of sprains. The thread used was called the "wristing thread," and the Incantation was as follows:—

Our Saviour rade.
His fore-foot slade,
Our Saviour lighted down;
Sinew to sinew—joint to joint.
Blood to blood, and bone to bone,
Mend thou in God's name!

Another Orkney formula was as follows:—

A thread, having on it nine knots, was tied round the sprained part. As the thread was being tied the following Incantation was muttered—

Nine knots upo' this thread
Nine blessings on thy head;
Blessings to take away thy pain
And ilka tinter of thy strain.

ST COLUMBA AS THE PATRON OF CATTLE.

At the commencement of this paper I mentioned that in Uist the *Eolais* there used were attributed to St Columba. The Saint's name is mentioned in one of the versions of the *Eolas* for a Sprain above given. In the Western Islands St Columba appeared to have been regarded as the patron of cattle. When a man spoke to a neighbour about the neighbour's cattle, he said—

Gu'n gleidheadh Calum-Cille dhuibh iad.
(May St Columba protect them for you).

As a woman left her cattle on the hill-side to graze she waved her hand towards them, saying—

"Buachailleachd Dhia 's Chaluim-Chille oirbh."
(May the herding and guardianship of God and St Columba be on you).

An Eriskay woman used to address her cattle—

Gu'm bu duinte gach slochd
'S gu'm bu reidh gach cnoc—
Buachailleachd Chalum-Chille oirbh,
Gus an tig sibh dhachaidh.

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Translated—

May each pit be closed,
And each hillock be plain;
Columba's herding on ye
Till home ye return.

We have also the following saying regarding St Columba's day—

Diardaoin, La 'Ille Chaluim Chaoimh,
Latha chur chaorach air seilbh,
Gu deilbh, 's gu cur ba air laogh.[1]

Translated—

Thursday, gentle Saint Columba's Day.
The day to put sheep to pasture,
To warp, and cow to calf.

Adamnan tells us of the Saint blessing cattle, and their number increasing. Nesan, a poor man, who entertained Columba for the night, had five heifers. "Bring them to me that I may bless them," said the Saint. They were brought. He raised his holy hand, blessed them, and said—"From this day thy five little heifers shall increase to the number of one hundred and five cows." Another poor man, named Columban, had five small cows. They too were blessed by the Saint, and thereafter increased to one hundred and five!—*Vide* Book II., chapters xx. and xxii).

Another cattle blessing was as follows:—

'Siubhal monaidh, 'siubhal coille,
Siubhail gu reidh, fada, farsuinn;
Buachaille Mhoire fo d' chois,
'S gu'm bu slan a thig thu as!

Translated—

Travelling mountain, travelling wood,
Travel freely, far and wide;
Mary's herdsman by thy feet,
And safely may thou hither come!

The following is a more elaborate version of it, and is called

Rann Buachailleachd, or Herding Incantation.

'Siubhal monaidh, 'suibhal coille,
Siubhail gu reidh, fada, farsuinn,
Banachaig Phadruig mu'r casan

[1] Among the peasantry in Shetland marriages almost invariably take place on Thursday.

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Gus am faic mise slan a ri'sd sibh
An sian a chuir Moire mu 'buar
Moch a's anmoch 's a tighinn bhuaith ;
Ga'n gleidheadh bho pholl 's bho eabar,
Bho fheith 's bho adharcan a cheile,
Bho lionadh na creige-ruaidhe
'S bho luaths na Feinne.
Banachaig Phadruig mu'r casan
Gu'm a slan a thig sibh dhachaidh.

Translated—

Traversing hills, traversing woods,
And (while) grazing far and near,
[May] St Patrick's milkmaid attend you
Till I see you well again ;
[And may] the Charm made by Mary for her cattle,
Early and late going to and coming from the pasture
Protect you from pit and quagmire,
From fens or morasses, and from each other's horns ;
From the filling of the red rock [the rose or swelling of the udder ?]
And from the swift-footed Fingalians.
May St Patrick's milkmaid attend your footsteps,
And scatheless may you again come home.

Akin to the foregoing is the

Orra-Gleidheadh Spreidhe.

It was as follows—

Cuiridh mise 'n spreidh so romham
Mar a dh' orduich Righ an Domhain,
Moire ga 'n gleidheadh o fheith nan coimheach,
Air thùs, a Bhride mhin, bi mar riu,
Le d' bhata 's le d' lorg bi rompa,
'S gu'n glacadh tu clur as d' fholt,
O rinn thu dhaibh eolas a's earal,
Ga 'n gleidheadh o chall 's o lochd,
O bhathadh an allt 's o gharadh cam,
No o mhilleadh sluic.
A Bhride mhin, fagam agad,
Moire tilleadh thugam
Le leas Dhia 's Chalum-Chille,
Casan cuiribh fothaibh,
'S drochaid Mhoire romhaibh.

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In the following Charm noted from an old Lochbroom man we have St Columba's cure of the cattle disease known as

An Tairbhean.

An t-eolas a rinn Calum-Cille
Dh' aona bhò na caillich.
Cas air muir, cas air tir,
Cas eile 'sa' churachan.
Air mhial, air bhalg,
Air ghalar dearg, air thairbhein.
An tairbhean a tha na do bhroinn
Air an ailbhinn [1] sin thall, [2]
Slainte dhut, a bheathaich !

Translated—

The Charm made by St Columba
For the old wife's only cow.
One foot on the sea, one foot on land,
And another foot in the corracle.
Against worm, against swelling,
Against red disease (strangury ?) and *tairbhean.*
May the *tairbhean* that's in your body
Go to yonder hard stone.
Health to you, beastie !

We often have St Columba presented to us with one foot on land and the other on the sea, suggesting his sway over sea and land—*per mare per terram.* According to the foregoing, we have the Saint with three feet—one on the sea, one on the land, and a third in the corracle !

A more elaborate version of the *Eolas* is given by me in Vol. VIII. of the Gaelic Society's Transactions. It is as follows :—

An t-Eolas a rinn Calum-Cille
Dh' aona bhò na caillich ;
Bha cas Chalum-Chille 's a' churachan,
'S a chas eil' air tir :—
A thairbhein, a thainig thar chuan
'S o bhun na talmhainn fada thall—
Air mhial air bhalg,

[1] My informant explained *ailbhinn* as "A' chreag a's cruaidhe th' ann"—(the hardest rock there is). He said it was to be found in the desert, and was so hard "that blood alone would soften it !" "Aill" is an old Celtic word, signifying a cliff or rock.

[2] Here mention the name of the beast—Niseag, Blarag, or whatever it may be.

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Air ghalar dearg,
A lughdachadh do bhuilg;
'S a mharbhadh do mhial,
A mharbhadh fiolan fionn,
A mharbhadh fiolan donn,
A mharbhadh biast do leann,
A mharbhadh an tairbhein.
Gu'm faigh thu leasachadh—
Aghachain, tog do cheann.

Translated—

The charm that Columba wrought
For the old wife's only cow;
Columba's one foot was in the coracle
And the other on land:—
Thou *tairbhean* that camest over sea
And from the foundations of the earth far beyond;
Against worm, against swelling,
Against the red disease;
To reduce thy swelling,
And to kill thy worm;
To kill the white nescock,
To kill the brown nescock,
To kill the worm in thy bile,
To kill the *tairbhean*.
May thou get relief;
Heifer, raise up thine head.

Sealmachas.

The following *Eolas* is for *Sealmachas*. Macalpine, in the list of *Orras* already given, calls it "*Seamlachas*." When a cow lost her calf, she refused to give her milk, or allow the calf of another cow to suck her. This *Orra* was said to induce her to give her milk, or allow the calf of another to suck her. Here again we have St Columba mentioned. The *Eolas* was as follows:—

An t-Eolas a rinn Calum-Cille
Dh'aona bhò na caillich,
Air thabhairt a' bhainne
'N deigh marbhadh a laoigh;
Bho fheithean a droma
Gu feithean a tarra
'S bho fheithean a tarra
Gu feithean a taobh,

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Bho bhun a da chluaise,
Gu smuais a da leise,
Air thabhairt a' bhainne
'N deigh marbhadh a laoigh.

Translated—

The charm that St Columba wrought
For the old wife's only cow,
For the giving of the milk
After the killing of her calf;
From the veins of her back
To the veins of her belly,
From the veins of her belly
To the veins of her side,
From the roots of her two ears
To the joints of her two thighs,
For the giving of the milk
After the killing of her calf.

In the following Irish Charm, from Mr O'Faherty, we have St Columba similarly presented to us :—

Ortha a chuir Columb Cille
Do bhó giolla an t-sonais.
Ta mo chos air mhuir agus mo chos air tír.
A Righ ta ar Néimh foir ar m-boin
Agus bun teanga na laoigh.
Teiridh a bhaile a's beidh sí slán!

Translated—

The Charm sent by St Columba
For the cow of the Servitor of Peace—
My foot is on the sea and my foot is on land;
O King, who art in Heaven, succour the cow,
And take the calf under thy protection.
Come home, cow, and be well.

Rann Leigheas Galair Cruidh.

In the following *Rann leigheas galair cruidh*, we have Christ and his Apostles instead of St Columba :—

Criosd is Ostail is Eoin,
An Triuir a's binne gloir,
A dh' eirich a dheanamh na h-ortha,
Roimh dhorus na cathrach,
No air glun deas do Mhic.

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Air na mnathan mur-shuileach,
Air na fearaibh geur shuileach,
'S air na saighdean sitheadach,
Dithis a' lasachadh alt agus ga'n adhachadh
Agus triuir a chuireas mi an urra riu sin.
An t-Athair, 's am Mac, 's an Spiorad Naomh,
Ceithir ghalara fichead an aoraibh duine 's beathaich,
Dia ga 'n sgiobadh, Dia ga 'n sguabadh
As t' fhuil a's t' fheoil, 's a d' chnamh 's a d' smuais,
'S mar thog Criosda meas air bharra gach crann,
Gu 'm b' ann a thogas E dhiotsa
Gach suil, gach gnù 's gach farmad,
O'n la 'n diugh gu latha deireannach do shaoghail.

Translated—

Christ and his Apostles and John,
The Three of most excellent glory,
That ascended to make supplication
Through the gateway of the city,
Fast by the right knee of God's own Son.
As regards evil-eyed [lit., wall-eyed] women,
As regards sharp-eyed men ;
As regards swift-speeding elf-arrows,
Two to strengthen and renovate the joints,
And three to back (these two) as sureties,
The Father, the Son, the Holy Ghost.
Four-and-twenty diseases to which man and beast are subject ;
God utterly extirpate, sweep away, and eradicate them
From out thy blood and flesh, thy bones and marrow,
And as Christ uplifted its proper foliage [fruit]
To the extremities or the branches on each tree-top,
So may he uplift from off and out of thee
Each (evil) eye, each frowning look, malice and envy,
From this day forth to thy last day on earth. Amen.

STRANGURY.

The next Eolas I will submit to you is *Eolas a' Mhun-deirg*, or strangury in cattle. The performer measured the animal's spine with the thumb and fore-finger, and at the same time repeated the following Incantation thrice :—

Mar a ruitheas amhuinn fhuar,
'S mar a mheiltheas (bhleitheas) muileann luath,
Stad air t-fhuil a's ruith ar t-fhual.

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Translated—

As runs a cold river,
As a swift mill grinds,
Let thy blood stop, and thy urine flow.

Another Uist version is as follows :—

A bhean sin 's a bhean bhalbh,
Thainig thugainn a tir nam marbh ;
A rug air a choire 'na cruth,
Fuasgail an dubh 's lig an dearg.

A PANACEA FOR ALL ILLS.

The following was a cure for all the ills that flesh is heir to :—

Ola cas easgainn,
Bainne-cìch circe,
A's geir mheanbh-chuileag,
Ann an adharc muice,
Agus ite cait ga shuathadh ris.

Translated—

Oil from an eel's foot,
Milk from a hen's teat,
The tallow of midges
(Compounded) In the horn of a pig,
And rubbed to the part with a feather from a cat's wing !

The above was as potent as "An t-ian a thig a ubh coilich, sgriosaidh e 'n saoghal !—(The chicken that will come out of a cock's egg can destroy the world).

The Irish formula for the cure of whooping-cough is somewhat similar to our panacea. If a relative of the invalid saw a man pass on horseback, he was to be accosted thus :—

"A ghiolla an eich bhain cad a liaghfadh an trioch ?"
"Bainne cích circe agus e bhleoghan an adharc muice,
Agus cleite cait a chur ga shuathadh !"

Translated—

"O rider of the white steed, what will cure the whooping-cough ?"
"Milk from a hen's teat, milked into the horn of a pig,
And rubbed on with a cat's feather."

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Another Irish cure for the whooping-cough is as follows :—The god-father buys a red thread, of about two feet in length, knots it into a circle or collar, and puts it round the neck of the god-child. This is supposed to relieve the latter !

AMBIGUOUS INCANTATIONS.

Occasionally one meets not only with obscure phrases, but also with whole Incantations, the meaning of which is far from clear. Here is one :—

Uisg' an Easain
Air mo dhosan.
Tog dhiom do rosad
'S aghaidh fir an cabhaig orm !

Will any learned Gael explain its meaning and purpose ?

THE BLESSINGS.

I have dwelt at such length on Charms intended for cures, etc., that my observations on Blessings and Miscellaneous Charms must be very brief. There were ceremonies and blessings for all the more important duties engaged in. When the cattle were sent to the sheilings in the early summer, there were Blessings suitable for the occasion. Specimens of these are given in the paper on "Old Hebridean Hymns," contributed by Mr A. A. Carmichael to Lord Napier's Report (Royal Commission, Highlands and Islands, 1883).

The Blessing of the Boats was a ceremony regularly observed in the Outer Islands; but the old Gaelic Blessings appear to be now forgotten. Bishop Carsewell gives a Boat Blessing (Modh Beandaighthe luinge ag dul diondsaidhe na fairrge) in his Gaelic translation of the Liturgy of John Knox; and the manner of Alexander Macdonald's "Beannachadh" of the *Birlinn* of Clan Ranald indicates that such Blessings were common in his time. In the Ritual of the Church of Rome there is a Blessing for a New Ship—"*Benedictio Novæ Navis*"—and this Blessing is regularly attended to in the Catholic parts of the Hebrides. The ceremony is quite a short one. The priest goes on board the new boat, says the *Benedictio*, and sprinkles the boat with Holy Water. This ceremony is repeated every time there is a change in the crew.

The Barra fishermen always carry a bottle of Holy Water in the prow of the boat, and a Blessed Candle in the cabin. When in danger they sprinkle themselves and boat with Holy Water, and, lighting the Blessed Candle in the cabin gather round it on

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their knees and say their prayers. In throwing out the long lines and nets, they do so invoking the Three Persons of the Trinity.

According to Hibbert a somewhat similar practice prevailed among the ancient Shetlanders. A layman assuming the *rôle* of an ecclesiastic muttered certain religious Incantations over water. The element was then named "Forespoken Water," and boats were sprinkled with it, and limbs washed with it.

The fishing in Barra is annually inaugurated with religious services in the Church on St Bride's Day—*La Fheill Brighde;* and until a few years ago the fishing banks were distributed among the various crews.[1] The ceremony of distributing the banks was carried on by means of casting lots, under the direction of the priest. As the people left the Church, they chanted one of their old Hymns :—

Athair, a Mhic, 's a Spioraid Naoimh,
Biodh an Tri-'n-Aon leinn a la' 's a dh-oidhch'.
Air chul nan tonn, no air thaobh nam beann
Biodh ar Mathair leinn, 's biodh a lamh mu'r ceann.

Translated—

O Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
May the Three-in-One protect us night and day!
On the tossing billows or on the mountain,
May Mary's arm be our guard alway!

According to Hebridean tradition, a Celtic Saint blessed Barra with these words—"Toradh mara gu tìr a' Cuile Mhoire," implying that the produce of the ocean might be brought from the Virgin Mary's private store-room to the shore. The sea was regarded as the Virgin's Treasury, and when an unexpected haul of fish was landed, it was observed it came from *Cuile Mhoire*, or the secret store of the Virgin. Among boat names in Barra a noticeable one may be mentioned, viz., "Maris Stella." Then the devotional character of the Barra fisherman as he commences his vocation for the season is well depicted in the following beautiful hymn from Father Allan Macdonald's Collection?—

[1] A similar practice formerly prevailed in parts of Shetland. Edmonston, who published his "Zetland Islands" in 1809, informs us that the fishermen of the Island of Burra, to the west of Scalloway, "divide the range of the fishing ground; and the occupier of a farm has generally also a particular spot allotted to him on which he sets his lines."—*Vide* Vol. I., p. 234.

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Dia 'bhith timchioll air an sgothaidh
Mu'n imich i gu doimhneachd mara :
Slig' air linne dhuinn a treuntachd,
Mur eil freasdal Dé ga faire.

Faiceamaid do shoillse, 'Mhoire,
'Nuair tha stoirm is oidhche 'gleac ruinn ;
Gur a tusa " Reul na Mara," [1]
'S e faire 'n éiginnich do chleachdadh.

'Aingil ghil, dian thusa iùl duinn,
'Threoraicheas ar siùbh'l feadh gharbh-thonn :
Sgiath do chùraim sgaoil mu'n cuairt duinn,
'Nuair chinneas gruaim air gnùis na fairge.

Guidheamaid do thaic-sa, 'Pheadair,
Gun thu 'leigeil beud 'n ar caramh :
Chuireadh muinntir cuain na d' fhreasdal,
Teasruig sinn bho ascall mara.

Gur a buidhe dhuinn an cosnadh
'Bha na h-Ostail fhein a' cleachdadh ;
'S minig bha Mac Dé na'n cuideachd
'Cur an tuigse dhuinn a thlachd deth.

'Dhia, beannaich ar driamlach,
'N lion, 's gach inneal-glacaidh 'th' againn ;
Iomain thuca mar is iomchaidh
Spreidh 'tha 'g ionaltradh 's an aigeann.

Beannaich thusa dhuinn ar curachd,
Cha'n urrainn nach tig cuibheas oirre ;
Gu'm meallamaid a' Bheannachd Bharrach—
" Toradh mar' a Cuile Mhoire !"

'Nuair a's fheudar dhuinn 'bhi tilleadh
Stiùir Thu cinnteach sinn gu cala.
Ma chuir Thu oirnne seach ar feuma
Cha'n fhaicear leinn an déirceach falamh.

Na leig thugainn bàs le graide,
Orduich Sagart 'bhi m'ar timchioll ;
Naomhaich le d' Ola 's le d' Chorp sinn,
Mu'n teid anam bochd air iomrall.

[1] " Maris Stella."

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In connection with these religious services in Barra, it may be mentioned that in some parts of Ireland the fishing season used to be commenced by saying Mass on the ocean. The late A. M. Sullivan describes this ceremony, as he witnessed it in his youth at Bantry Bay. He says :—

"Few sights could be more picturesque than the ceremony by which, in our bay, the fishing season was formally opened. Selecting an auspicious day, unusually calm and fine, the boats, from every creek and inlet for miles around, assembled at a given point, and then, in solemn procession, rowed out to sea, the leading boat carrying the priest of the district. Arrived at the distant fishing-ground, the clergyman vested himself, an altar was improvised on the stern-sheets, the attendant fleet drew around, and every head was bared and bowed while the Mass was said. I have seen this 'Mass on the ocean' when not a breeze stirred, and the tinkle of the little bell or the murmur of the priest's voice was the only sound that reached the ear; the blue hills of Bantry faint on the horizon behind us, and nothing nearer beyond than the American shore!"—(*New Ireland*).

There is a story told of a fisherman in one of the Western Islands, whose prayer before going to sea was of a somewhat different tone. He considered himself a very respectful man *(duine modhail)*, and addressed the Deity as *Sibhse* (You) instead of the customary *Thusa* (Thou). On one occasion when going to sea, danger was anticipated, and he prayed—

"Ud a Thighearna Dhia, Ruin, na 'm biodh Sibh cho math a's curam a ghabhail do Mhairi 's do Sheonaid; ach a' Bhan-Diabhul, nighean Phara Mhic-a'-Phearsain, deanadh i a roghainn: bithidh fear eile aice ma 's bi mise ithte aig na partain!"

Translated—

"O Lord God, my Beloved, if You would be so good as to take the care of Mary and Jessie; but that She-Devil, the daughter of Peter Macpherson, let her take her choice: she will have another husband before I am eaten by the crabs!"

Mary and Jessie were his daughters. Needless to say the "she-devil" was his wife.

CONCLUSION.

I feel that this paper has extended far beyond the limits usually allowed, and that no matter how interesting the subject may be in itself, I must now conclude. In doing so, I cannot adopt more fitting language than that used by the Hebridean peasant on finishing the labours of the day, and before retiring for night. When smooring the fire he says—

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Smalaidh mise 'n nochd an teine,
Mar a smalas Mac Moire ;
Gu'm bu slan an tigh 's an teine,
Gu'm bu slan a' chuideachd uile.
Co bhios air an lar ?
Peadar agus Pàl.
Co bhios air an fhaire nochd ?
Moire mhin-gheal 's a Mac.
Bial De a labhras,
Aingeal geal a dh' innseas--
Aingeal an dorus an tighe,
Ga'r comhnadh 's ga'r gleidheadh
Gus an tig an solus geal a maireach.[1]

He then says the following *Altachadh Laidhe*, or Bed-going Prayer :—

Tha mise nochd a dol a laidhe—
Ma's a bas dhomh anns a' bhas chadail.[2]
Gu'm b' ann air deas laimh Dhe 'dhuisgeas mi.
A Righ na h-ola firinnich
Na diobair sinn bho d' mhuinntearas,
A liuthad lochd,
A rinn mo chorp,
'S nach fhaod mi nochd a chuimhneachadh
Dia agus Moire agus Micheil,
Bhi leam bho mhullach mo chinn,
Gu traighean mo bhuinn.
Guidheam Peadar, guidheam Pol,
Guidheam Moire Oigh 's a Mac,
Guidheam an da Ostal deug,
Gu'n mi dhol eug gun 'ur leas.

[1] The peasants of Connemara have a somewhat similar "smooring" blessing. In *Siamsa an Gheimhridh*, at page 139, there is the following prayer :—

An Phaidir a deirtear aig coigilt na teinneadh roimh dul a chodladh.

Coiglim-se an teinne seo mar choigil Criost cáthach ;
Brighde faoi na bun agus Mac Muire in a lár ;
Na trí aingeala is mó cumhachd i g-cuirt na ngrás
A' cúmhdach 's a coimheid an tigh seo 's a muinntir airís go lá. Amen.

A version of the same *Paidir* from Cork is somewhat different—

Coiglim an teine so mar choigleann Criost cách,
Muire air dha cheann an tighe, a's Brighde in a lár,
Gach a bhfuil d'ainglibh 's de naomhaibh i gcathair na ngrás
Ag cosant 's ag coimead lucht an tighe sco go lá.

[2] In Ireland the expression "Bas cadalta na h-oidhche" is used.

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On getting into bed he says the *Altachadh Leapa*, or Bed Prayer, as follows [1] :—

Laidhidh mi nochd
Le Moire 's le 'Mac ;
'S le Brighde fo brat,
Le Domhnach nam feart,
Le Mathair mo Righ
Ga m' dhion bho gach lot ;
Cha laidh mi leis an olc ;
Cha laidh an t-olc leam ;
Eiridh mi le Dia
Ma's ceadach le Dia leigeil leam,
Deas-làmh Dhia
Is Chriosta gun robh leam ;
Crois nan Naomh 's nan Aingeal leam,
Bho mhullach mo chinn
Gu traighean mo bhuinn
A chionn Dia agus Moire
A chuideachadh leam ;
A Righ, agus, a Mhoire ghloirmhor,
A Mhic na h-Oighe cubhraidh,
Saoir sinn bho phiantainean
'S bho thigh iosal dorcha duinte.
Dion ann a's as ar colunn
Ar n-anama bochda
A tha air fior chor-oisinn na firinn.
Guidheam Peadar, guidheam Pól,
Guidheam Moire Oigh 's a Mac,
Guidheam an da Ostal deug
Gu'n mi dhol eug gun 'ur leas.
M'anam a bhi air do laimh dheis a Thighearna ;
Bho 'n 's Tu a cheannaich e ;
Micheil Naomh a bhi 'n comhail m'anama
Nise agus aig uair mo bhais. Amen.

[1] The Irish have a similar prayer. I quote it also from the *Siamsa*, and is as follows :—

An Phaidir a deirtear 'nuair luigheas duine air a leabaidh.

Luigheam leat Iosa, agus go luidhidh tú liom ;
Ola Chriost air m' anam, Cré na n-Abstol os mo chionn.
A Athair a chruthaigh mé,
A Mhic a cheannaigh mé,
A Spioraid Naoimh a bheannaigh mé.
A Bhainrioghan na gile, a's a Bhainrioghan na h-òige,
Tog mé as na peacadhaibh agus cuir me air an eólas,
Agus cuir in mo chroidhe an aithrighe go silfead na deóra,
'S má tá sé i n-dán dam bás d' fhaghail roimh mhaidin,
I seilbh na glóre go raibh m' anam. Amen.

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